

A Colonial Palimpsest:

Benjamin Duterrau's Portrayals of Aboriginal People

By

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Abstract

This thesis argues for Benjamin Duterrau's merited place in Australian colonial art history. It examines Duterrau's depictions of Aborigines, both formally and contextually, seeking to reignite interest in Duterrau's work and its importance in contemporary society. On a more general level, it is concerned with visual European responses to Aborigines and how those responses may be read by a modern-day audience.

Since the sale of Duterrau's work immediately following his death in 1851, there has been no solo exhibition of his work. His colonial depictions of Aboriginal people have largely been overlooked by scholars whose attention has instead turned to Thomas Bock and John Glover. In comparison, Duterrau's work is often considered artistically amateur and his recordings of people and events inaccurate. Instead I argue that his images are important historical texts that can add new dimensions to understanding colonial ideologies and European relations with Aborigines.

While there has been no significant study dedicated to Duterrau's work, other than Stephen Scheduling's *The National Picture* (2002) which is primarily concerned with the whereabouts of one of Duterrau's paintings, scholarly work focusing on Duterrau has tended to see his work in terms of colonial propaganda. From the limited writings on Duterrau, *The Conciliation* (1840), Duterrau's painting of George Augustus Robinson surrounded by Aborigines, has attracted the greatest interest as it is widely accepted as the first history painting in Australia. The significant status of *The Conciliation* has sparked debates over the historical accuracy of its depiction. For many writers its place in art history continues to be

problematic. Duterrau's oil portraits of Aborigines are also bathed in controversy.

This thesis will engage with the differing views and provide an analysis of how Duterrau's work may be valued in contemporary Australian society. In doing so it reveals the contingencies of reading an historical artwork and the complex, emotional investments in portraits of Aborigines.

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Some notes on terminology

As Bain Attwood has pointed out (1989, x), Australian aboriginal people only came to be known under the homogenous title of ‘Aborigines’ following European settlement. The first permanent British settlement in Van Diemen’s Land, as it was then known, was established in 1803 at Risdon Cove. When referring to exploration voyages from the seventeenth century until 1803, the term *aborigines* will appear in lower case as they were not then known homogenously as ‘the Aborigines’; but were instead most often referred to as ‘savages’, ‘Indians’ or ‘natives’. From 1803 onwards, and when discussing Aborigines in a general sense that is relevant across time, the term will be capitalised.

Tasmania was known as Van Diemen’s Land until 1856. This thesis focuses on the 1830s so the term *Van Diemen’s Land* will be used when discussing this period as it was during Benjamin Duterrau’s lifetime. However, when discussing the State in general, not specific to the period prior to 1856, the term *Tasmania* will be used. The nomenclature of *Tasmanian Aborigines* will be used for clarity, to save a confusing admixture of *Van Diemen’s Land Aborigines* and *Tasmanian Aborigines*.

Aboriginal names will be spelt as they are by Duterrau, however when quoting from other authors I will leave the names as they are spelt by those authors.

Discrepancies only appear with the name Truggernana as the table below demonstrates:

Name as spelt by Duterrau:	Truggernana	Otherwise spelt:	Truganini	Trucanini	Trugananer
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The terms *primitive* and *savage* will be put into quotation marks. This usage is not an attempt to “wish away the heritage of the West’s exploitation of non-Western peoples” as Mariana Torgovnick suggested (1990, 20), but rather to signal particular views of the time in discussion. Similarly, at times the term *civilised* will also be put into quotation marks. This will emphasise the ethnocentric construction of the term, as other cultures were judged according to the European understanding of the concept.

The term *Europeans* will be used to describe explorers and settlers who came to Australia from Europe. This term will consistently categorise these individuals throughout this thesis, even into the 1840s when they were gaining new Australian identities.

Lastly, another term that requires elucidation is the concept of ‘the Other’ with a capital O which cultural historians, following the long established use of other disciplines, have recently become interested in (Burke 2001, 123). The Other refers to what is diametrically opposed to the occident. The Other relates to all kinds of difference (gender, race, symbolic) but in this thesis ‘the Other’ in question is the racial Other. This term will be employed to indicate the generalising of racial difference where those other than Europeans were collectively classed as lesser and different. Thus, as will become evident in Chapter One, in the nineteenth century Aborigines were aligned with Africans and other peoples who were understood as Other.

Abbreviations

<i>HTC</i>	<i>Hobart Town Courier</i>
ca.	circa
TMAG	Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery
TAC	Tasmanian Aboriginal Centre

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Introduction

“We hope the public spirit of the colony will not allow these efforts of Mr.

Duterrau’s pencil to lie in oblivion nor to pass unrecompensed” (HTC, 20

December 1833).

Australia’s history is highly contentious. In the past few decades, public debate over how to interpret the British colonisation of Australia has culminated in the form of the History Wars (see Attwood & Foster 2003). The debate underlying the History Wars can largely be broken down into three views: that British colonisation was a bloody and violent invasion; that frontier contact was characterised by shared consent and accommodation on both sides; or that it was met with Aboriginal resistance. Ultimately, the History Wars are primarily concerned with how to interpret Australia’s past so as to move forward and establish better relations between today’s settler population and Indigenous Australians and Torres Strait Islanders.

The interest in interpreting past actions has spawned further debates over the credibility of historical accounts. These historical accounts are most often in the form of archival records as written or oral sources but they may also be in the form of art. Colonial artworks are vital historical documents as “they record acts of eyewitnessing” (Burke 2001, 14), produced in response to the artist’s social and cultural environment. Hence “many painters may be described as social historians” (Burke 2001, 103). In the past few decades images have come to be understood as credible historical evidence with the rise of cultural history which employs cultural products such as artworks in “newly evolving historical narratives” (Layton-Jones 2008, 189). Images were first used in an ancillary way to support factual evidence

but are now seen as important sources in their own right. In the nineteenth century visual appearance had great import to scientific theories of race and character. Hence, visual recordings of Aborigines made in the nineteenth century are crucial to understanding early European perceptions of Aborigines. Furthermore, the way these works are exhibited and employed by contemporary writers and artists profoundly affects their impact as this thesis will reveal.

The work of Benjamin Duterrau has great historical value as it depicts Tasmanian Aborigines and directly relates to a critical moment in Tasmania's history. Duterrau is the only known artist to have recorded George Augustus Robinson in action. His painting *The Conciliation* (1840) documents the controversial agreement between Robinson and Tasmanian Aborigines to remove them from their homelands and relocate them at Wybalenna on Flinders Island.¹ In spite of extant critique of this painting, Duterrau and his portrayals of Aborigines have attracted scant critical and curatorial attention. Since the sale of Duterrau's work immediately following his death in 1851, there has been no solo exhibition of his work. His colonial depictions of Aboriginal people have largely been overlooked by scholars whose attention has instead turned to Thomas Bock and John Glover. In comparison, Duterrau's work is often considered artistically amateur and his recordings of people and events untruthful. This contrasts with the reputation he enjoyed in his own lifetime.

In the 1830s local newspapers ardently supported Duterrau's work. The positive proclamation of his work and his status as an "eminent artist" (*HTC*, 12

¹ See 'Robinson and Race Relations' in Chapter One for the historical background of this event. The content of Duterrau's painting *The Conciliation* and its connection to Robinson's agreement with Aborigines will be discussed in 'The Conciliation and its Creation' in Chapter Two, and further explored in 'Reading *The Conciliation*' in Chapter Three.

July 1833) meant that he was undoubtedly well known and influential in Hobart. He was also the first to publicly lecture on art at the Hobart Mechanics Institute. Duterrau presumably impressed the Institute audience with his artistic knowledge which facilitated respect for his work. Art historian Eve Buscombe suggests that “Duterrau’s work had much more to offer because he was an articulate artist who could verbalise the aims of his work” (1979, 162). However, viewing Duterrau’s work without any verbalised intentions, it lacks the lustre of magnificence it must have had in its day and has thus been left to lie in relative obscurity.

This thesis seeks to rekindle an interest in Duterrau’s work, promoting its potential to enrich understandings of Tasmania’s past. It argues for Duterrau’s merited place in Australian art history whilst examining his depictions of Aborigines, both formally and contextually. It also analyses the historical context of the creation of Duterrau’s work and the modern-day context of viewing his work. Pivotal questions include: Why did Duterrau create images of Aborigines? How did people respond to his depictions at the time? What makes his portrayals of Aborigines important? What value and meaning do they hold for viewers today?

I have approached my thesis from an interdisciplinary background through the School of Fine Arts and the School of Riawunna. I have also worked with curator Jane Stewart at the Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery (TMAG). Through these channels my aim has been to provide a comprehensive analysis of Duterrau’s work both aesthetically and contextually, considering the formal elements as well as its historic and ongoing importance.

My research is qualitative, drawing on a broad array of both primary and secondary sources. Central to my thesis are Duterrau’s etchings and oil paintings of

Aborigines held in the TMAG. Intimate inspection of these primary sources at the museum enabled a thorough analysis of the formal properties of Duterrau's work. As no diary or written artist statements from Duterrau exist, other important resources have included newspaper articles and the surviving lecture Duterrau gave at the Hobart Mechanics Institute in 1849. Duterrau also advertised plans for his paintings in local newspapers. These brief advertisements indicate his intentions, especially for the proposed 'National Picture', now known in the form of *The Conciliation*. Newspaper reports also provide an insight into the initial public response to Duterrau's work. Many of the *Hobart Town Courier* newspaper reports have been digitised and are accessible online. However the *True Colonist* newspaper, which also references Duterrau, is only available in microfilm at the Archives Office of Tasmania. Both these sources have been employed in my thesis as they have provided me with a solid understanding of the context surrounding the creation of Duterrau's work.

Secondary sources elucidate the correlation between Duterrau and nineteenth-century beliefs in Van Diemen's Land. Bob Reece (1987) Nicholas Thomas (1994) and Phillip Jones (2007) have inspired me to see frontier contact as a complicated dynamic that cannot be reduced to straightforward patterns of conflict or resistance. This interpretation of frontier relations as fluid underlies my discussion of Duterrau's work. Secondary sources also speculate on Duterrau's inspiration and intentions. The most extensive inquiry into Duterrau's life and work can be found in Tim Bonyhady's numerous publications on Duterrau (1979, 1986, 1987, 1988, 2000a, 2000b) and in Stephen Scheduling's book *The National Picture* (2002). These references, along with many other articles (for example Broughton

1993; Butler 1996; Hoorn 2007) which discuss Duterrau and explore race relations and Tasmania's history have been vital to my research.

Most scholarship on Duterrau has tended to see his work as artistically inept and his depictions inaccurate. Contextually, his work is frequently dismissed as colonial propaganda made to support Eurocentric imperial values. However, I argue that there is far more to be found in Duterrau's work. In examining the creation of the work and how it has been valued over time, I highlight a medley of perspectives, revealing how Duterrau's work can enrich views of Tasmania's colonial past. I also analyse the formal qualities of Duterrau's work and draw attention to what distinguishes it from that of his contemporaries.

As this thesis involves historical discussion and questions of value, I feel some aspects of historical narration need to be addressed. Western history has traditionally been written from a third person perspective. The author was believed to be an objective channel for 'historical truths'. However, as historian Mathew Hollow (Hollow 2009, 44) emphasises, "these historical tropes hid the 'present' nature of history, that it is narrated *in* the present and *for* the present". Knowledge of the ethnic identity, gender, age, education and experiences of the author putting forth descriptions of the past is germane (see Smith 1980, 12), even though autobiographical information of the author is "performed" (Hollow 2009, 48) as it is created for an audience. Despite the complexities of this 'performance' and the flux of identity, I feel that it is important to partially reveal what informs my perspective. I am a twenty-two year old female fifth-generation Tasmanian from European convict and free settler heritage. I have grown up knowing Tasmania as home. I have always been curious of Tasmania's past but have never before dared to delve into it, deterred by the complexities of relations between European-settlers

and Aborigines. Duterrau's portrayals of Aborigines have been a vehicle for me to explore Tasmania's history.

Chapter One – 'Perceptions of Aborigines: The Case in Tasmania' – builds an historical framework to view Duterrau's work. This chapter introduces preconceived ideas concerning hunter-gatherers and the effects of these beliefs on visual European responses to Aborigines in Van Diemen's Land from exploration until the 1840s. Only Duterrau's precursors and contemporaries will be discussed in this chapter building up to a detailed exploration of Duterrau in Chapter Two.

Chapter Two – 'Telling the Story on Canvas: Benjamin Duterrau's Depictions of Aborigines' – concentrates on Duterrau, providing an in depth analysis of his portraits of Aborigines and his renowned history painting *The Conciliation*. This chapter links back to issues raised in Chapter One and contextualises the discussion to come in Chapter Three.

Chapter Three – 'Of Enduring Importance: Viewing Benjamin Duterrau's Work Today' – explores the significance of Duterrau's work in a contemporary context. The modern-day value and meaning of Duterrau's work will be addressed by analysing the museum strategies of exhibiting colonial portraits of Aborigines such as Duterrau's, and analysing how Duterrau's portraits and *The Conciliation* have been read as historical texts and utilised in the work of contemporary artists. I will engage in recent debates concerning whether or not Duterrau's portraits may serve as memorials to Aborigines who died as a result of European contact. This chapter aims for a fresh perspective on the significance of Duterrau's work, highlighting its importance in adding new dimensions to understanding colonial ideologies and relations with Aborigines.

Chapter One

PERCEPTIONS OF ABORIGINES: THE CASE IN TASMANIA

The initial European perceptions of Tasmanian Aborigines were grounded in imagination. Abel Tasman, the first European explorer to be aware of the aborigines' existence, saw signs of their presence but not aborigines themselves. Tasman and his companions observed widely spaced notches in trees which led them to deduce that the native inhabitants were giants (Onsman 2003, 116). Even as their actual physicality began to contest the imaginings, an aura of elusiveness continued to influence perceptions of Tasmanian Aborigines which led to distinctive representations. From exploration to settlement, the bridge of difference was largely pillared by preconceived ideas concerning their disposition. Aborigines were often envisioned as either Noble Savages, or simply Other, physically at odds with the European body. Consequently it was these preconceptions that governed the nature of most representations. They were also at times depicted within a pristine landscape untouched by European influence. This chapter will explore images of Aborigines from different moments in Tasmania's history to build an historical context to the creation of Benjamin Duterrau's work.

Initial Responses to Aborigines Prior to Settlement

The first European explorers, comforted by their expected return to Europe, observed the Australian aborigines as passing curiosities. Their personal investment in the land was minimal and they had a strong, stable sense of identity. According to Christopher Allen, their representations of aborigines were thus "free

of prejudice” (1997, 19). Yet even these early representations were mediated through a distinct lens that comprised of prevalent European understandings of race and cultural difference.

Explorations to foreign lands led to new theories of race and humankind’s ‘true’ nature. The ‘savages’ that explorers encountered presented another way of living, one that was raw, sexual and sublime. Philosophers began to take “from the explorers a picture of a savage and virtuous being” (Fairchild 1961, 22). Writers such as Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1712-1778), amongst others, exalted that human beings were naturally social and meant to live in harmony with the so-called natural laws. These views, prompted by a reaction against the burdens of civilisation, led to the conception of the Noble Savage. The erudite officers aboard explorations who had been reading the Romantics were enthralled by the idea of the uninhibited Noble Savage being governed by emotions. The Noble Savage represented the ostensible ‘true’ state of humankind that Rousseau promoted. Strong communal ties were also connected to the Noble Savage ideal reflecting the romantic yearning for community prior to modernisation and industrialisation. As Mariana Torgovnick argues, believing in the free and natural state of the Noble Savage provided a channel to soul-search “for people who felt ill at ease or constrained in the West” (1998, 13). Inspired by the Romantics, the Noble Savage provided the educated elite of society with another way of life that was not burdened by civilisation. Conversely, to the uneducated majority, hunter gatherers, such as aborigines, were only seen as ‘savages’ (Broome 1989, 26).

The artists onboard eighteenth-century and early nineteenth-century exploratory voyages to Australia were largely concerned with creating images that would support the Noble Savage ideal in publications directed at educated

gentlemen. Thus they drew on classical European forms of physique to portray the perceived virtuous nature of aborigines as evident in Figure 1.



Figure 1: Thomas Medland (1755-1822), *Natives of Botany Bay*, date unknown

In Van Diemen's Land, John Webber, the professional draughtsman sent to accompany Captain Cook on his third voyage in 1777, depicted aborigines as innocent and virtuous. Webber's aboriginal subject in *Native of Van Diemen's Land, New Holland* (Fig. 2) has a long, narrow nose, high cheek bones and a pointy chin. Other than the skin-markings on his chest and arms, there is nothing to physically signal his cultural and racial difference. A visible lack of difference also characterises some of French explorer Jean Piron's depictions of Tasmanian Aborigines (such as Fig. 3).² On observing aborigines rubbing charcoal into their skin, Piron "expressed to the savages a wish of having his skin coloured like theirs with powdered charcoal ... Piron was presently as black as a New Hollander. The savage appeared highly satisfied with his performance" (de La Billardière 1800, 48). Transactions such as this suggest that interactions between explorers and aborigines were amicable at times. However, according to the Quaker James

² Jean Piron accompanied Rear Admiral Joseph Antoine Bruni d'Entrecasteaux in 1791 on a voyage in search of the missing French navigator, Jean-François de Galaup de La Pérouse (1741–88) (Dutton 1974, 20; Duyker 2006, 7). For more on Piron see Edward Duyker's article 'In Search of Jean Piron' (2006).

Backhouse Walker the early voyagers' acquaintances with the natives were "superficial" as their visits were too brief to learn of the character of the aborigines (1914, 267). The cordiality of their relations depended on the transitory nature of their visit. These early explorers did not have to compete for land, women and food or forge a new identity like the colonists and settlers had to and their representations were often directed towards a curious audience who were enchanted by the Rousseauian promise of the Noble Savage.

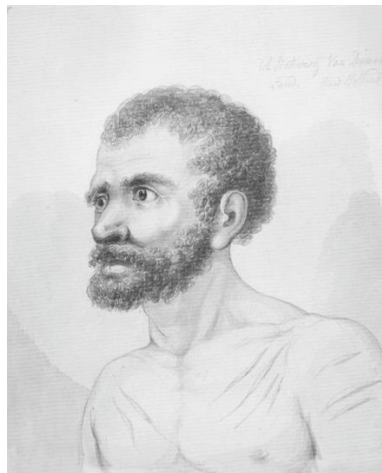


Figure 2: John Webber, *A Native of Van Diemen's Land*, New Holland, 1777



Figure 3: Jean Piron *Man of Cape Van Diemen (Homme du Cap de Diemen)*, date unknown

It is important to bear in mind, however, that there were many threads that quilted representations of Aborigines as “the positions adopted by individual savants and voyage naturalists were neither straightforward nor consistent” (Douglas 2008, 133). An artist’s training, anticipated audience, personal experience and previous encounters with other cultures greatly affected the outcome of their depictions. While the majority of images from early explorations conveyed aborigines as Noble Savages, there are examples which depart from this ideal. For instance, the aborigines portrayed by French explorer Jacques Arago are awkward and deformed (see Fig. 4). This image is evocative of the famous *Sir Brooke Boothby Reading Rousseau* (Fig. 5), yet seems to suggest that Rousseau’s ideal is flawed. The landscape is barren and the woman on the right is grotesque and awkwardly crouched on cracked earth. The racial and cultural difference of the indigenous subjects is not something to aspire to. They are not virtuous and noble but strange and uncouth.



Figure 4: Jacques Arago (1790- 1855), *Van Diemen Aborigines of Both Sexes*, date unknown



Figure 5: Joseph Wright, *Sir Brooke Boothby Reading Rousseau*, 1781



Figure 6: Barthélémy Roger after Nicholas-Martin Petit, *Terre de Diémen, Paraberi*, 1807

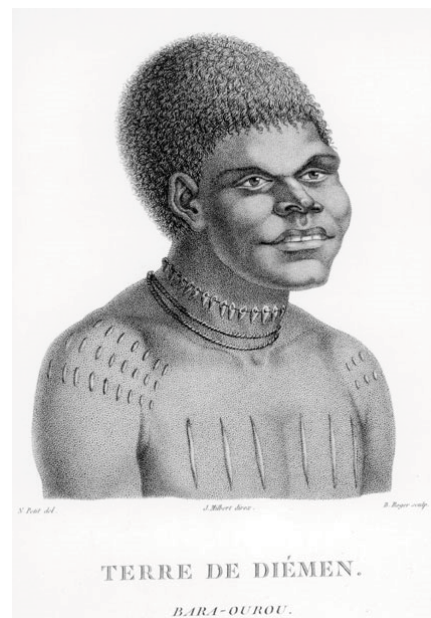


Figure 7: Barthélémy Roger after Nicholas-Martin Petit, *Terre de Diémen, Bara-Orou*, 1807

Nicholas-Martin Petit's images (for example see Fig. 6 and Fig. 7) are also associated with difference that is not noble in guise but simply Other. Petit seems to have drawn upon the African body to symbolise racial difference. This undoubtedly stemmed from Dutch and British contact with Africans in the sixteenth century, which led to Africans being attributed the role of the imagined

Other (Baum 2006, 29). North Africa, the Middle East and India became collectively known as ‘the Orient’ which sustained one of Europe’s “deepest and most recurring images of the Other” (Said 1978, 1). The Orient came to represent the antithesis of everything that was European. Representations of people from the Orient were often employed as a point of contrast to European civility and the European body (McLean 1998, 47; Mirzoeff 1995, 135). They were a foil to reflect upon the apparent shortcomings and burdens of civilisation. In the case of depictions of aborigines, African bodies that were already emblematic of racial and cultural difference may have been drawn on to convey aborigines as Other.

A Lacuna in the Early Years

As colonists began to forge a prolonged sense of home in Van Diemen’s Land, Aborigines were no longer seen through awe-struck eyes. Their presence became a daily obstacle and images depicting them waned. Other than Joseph Lycett’s images, which are estimated by the National Library of Australia to have been created around 1815, there are few known images from 1803-1830. I will explore some possible explanations while tracing the ambience of this period.

Since the first established settlement at Risdon Cove in 1803, there were moments of tension between landowners and Aborigines (Boyce 2009, 27). Conflict with landowners caused many Aborigines to “shun the settlement for many years” (West 1971 [1852], 264). This partially supports Rhys Jones’ hypothesis (1976, 5-6) that the dearth of images from early settlement may have been due to a lack of contact. However, there are further possibilities that need to be addressed.

Walker puts forth an interesting alternate reason suggesting that because Aborigines were not as “picturesque” as the Red Indians or Maoris they were “deemed unworthy of attention” (1914, 267). Another explanation is that during this time there was no compulsion to create images of Aborigines. As previously discussed, on voyages of exploration, images of Aborigines were produced as scientific records and portrayals of another way of being. Between 1803 and 1830 the Aborigines were no longer passing curiosities but people to compete with. According to N.J.B. Plomley (1991, 33), “The settlers viewed the Aborigines as useless savages who prevented them from occupying lands ... The pictorial record of the beginnings of settlement is therefore slight”. Creating images of Aborigines would have only reinstated the potential threat they posed to the progress of settlement. In this context, the absence of images can be seen as an attempt to temporarily deny their existence.

Only once a sense of supremacy was achieved did images of Aborigines reappear in the 1830s. At this time Aborigines were being ‘rounded up’ by George Augustus Robinson, removed from their homelands and sent to Wybalenna on Flinders Island. They were also believed to be low in numbers and rapidly declining. Consequently, a new drive emerged in the 1830s to visually record the last of the allegedly doomed Aborigines.

Robinson and Race Relations

The ‘conciliator’ George Augustus Robinson critically affected race relations in Van Diemen’s Land. His acts left a particularly strong impact on Duterrau as will be explored in Chapter Two.

Robinson was a bricklayer and builder in London before he travelled to Australia with no set plans for the future (Rae-Ellis 1996, 7). He arrived in Hobart on 20 January 1824 and took up residence in Hobart with other passengers he had travelled with on the *Triton*. His wife and large family had not accompanied him to Australia. In 1829 Robinson replied to an advertisement in the *Hobart Town Gazette* that called for:

a steady person of good character, who can be well recommended, who will take an interest in effecting an intercourse with this important race, and reside on Brune Island taking charge of the provisions supplied for the use of the natives of that place (7 March 1829, cited in Rae-Ellis 1996, 19).

Thus began Robinson's relationship with the Aborigines. After the "utter failure" (Meredith & Meredith 1853, 153) of the Black Line, which involved 2200 men working in lines towards the Tasman Peninsula to drive Aborigines to a point where they could be captured (Boyce 2009, 275), Robinson's ability to persuade the Aborigines to accompany him was warmly welcomed by the colony. Public opinion towards Aborigines had been heated during the Black Line but with Robinson's apparent success in taking Aborigines to Wybalenna on Flinders Island concerns quickly eased (Plomley 1991, 37). Robinson became highly celebrated as Hobart residents Louisa and Charles Meredith wrote, "The debt of gratitude the colony owes to Mr. Robinson can never be overpaid" (1853, 154). The purported success of Robinson's 'Friendly Mission' eased the colonists' minds – they no longer had to feel guilty of bloodshed (if they did to begin with) and the threat posed by the Aboriginal presence abated. Ironically, the Aborigines continued to die under Robinson's care when he became the commandant of Wybalenna (see

'The Commandant of Wybalena' in Rae Ellis 1996), although now out of public sight.

In 1837 the *Hobart Town Courier* ceased reporting on the state of the Aborigines at Flinders Island (Bonyhady 1979, 101). Now that they were concealed from sight and mind, they could nostalgically be imagined as passive victims of the progress of humankind. Hence they were restored to being curiosities: the last of their kind. Small etchings of Aborigines became popular to send to family and friends in England to show them the Aborigines' original state before their 'primitive' cultural traditions were abandoned in favour of 'civilised' ones, or before they completely vanished. Thomas Bock's small watercolour paintings, which will be discussed in detail in Chapter Two, became popular for this very purpose. Bock was initially commissioned to create portraits of Aborigines by Robinson who desired the images to illustrate a proposed book that never eventuated (Plomley 1991, 34). Bock then reproduced nine of these portraits for Lady Franklin and other colonists which soon became known as 'the popular series'. Bock's images are gentle, tender and touched by melancholy. As the Aborigines were relocated to Flinders Island, Bock's 'popular series' served as mementos of those Tasmanian Aborigines thought to be the very last.

The 'last' Tasmanian Aborigines also became the subjects of high art forms usually reserved for depicting the elite of society with portraits of them being sculptured and painted in oils, such as those by Duterrau which will be discussed in Chapter Two. Margaret Maynard suggests that individual portraits were privileged over group images as "a solitary Aboriginal head could pose no threat to established urban society" (1985, 96). As will be argued in Chapter Two however, this could have also been indicative of the respect which artists such as Duterrau

had for Aboriginal people. When Aborigines were depicted collectively in Van Diemen's Land they were often portrayed in a timeless Eden free from any signs of European interference such as in John Glover's *Mills Plains* (Fig. 8) and Joseph Lycett's *Aborigine Hunting a Kangaroo* (Fig. 9). Lycett and Glover both employed the picturesque convention to depict Aborigines (McLean 1998, 38). The picturesque as an artistic convention is a matter of "strategic framing" which employs a particular composition that often uses light to lead the viewer to the centre of the painting, creating an enclosed scene (Ryan, S. 1996, 62). According to Ian McLean (1998, 23), the picturesque in Australia sought to find a space between wilderness and civilisation and thus was affiliated with the process of settlement.



Figure 8: John Glover, *Mills Plains*, 1832



Figure 9: Joseph Lycett, *Aborigines Hunting Kangaroos*, 1817 (ca.)

In discussing art that depicts the Orient, art historian Linda Nochlin observes that “there are never any Europeans in ‘picturesque’ views” (1991, 36) which is the case with many of Glover’s and Lycett’s works. Nochlin also notes that “another important function of the picturesque” is “to certify that the people encapsulated are inferior to those who construct and view the images” (1991, 51). Nicholas Thomas believes this is true for Glover’s works as the Aboriginal people “are threateningly rather than pleasingly exotic ... [and they] are simply too distant to figure as social beings” (1999, 66). Bernard Smith agrees that Glover’s Aborigines are “small, dark, naked, and unattractive little people ... little black devils to be removed from his southern paradise” (1960, 201). In contrast, Lycett’s Aborigines are shown on a larger scale and thus appear as more present social beings. According to Geoffrey Dutton, “In Joseph Lycett’s work the Aboriginal is still master of the land” (1974, 26). Dutton also claims that Glover’s depictions are kind and empathetic. Yet there is no individuality awarded to the Aboriginal subjects in either Glover’s or Lycett’s work. The Aborigines are presented as a homogenous Other living a simple, peaceful existence uncorrupted by the impact of European culture. Viewers cannot individually connect with the figures depicted. This contrasts greatly with Duterrau’s portraits which will be examined in Chapter Two.



Figure 10: Francis Guillemard Simpkinson (de Wesselow), *Daphne*, From Oyster Bay, Van Diemen's Land, 1845



Figure 11: John Skinner Prout, *Queen Flora from Oyster Bay*, 1845

Later in Van Diemen's Land in the mid 1840s, John Skinner Prout and Francis Guillemard Simpkinson de Wesselow³ created images of Aborigines that acknowledged European influence. Both artists arrived in Van Diemen's Land in 1844, two years after the last Aborigines had been captured and sent to Wybalenna. Prout and Simpkinson sketched Aborigines together and their images are almost indistinguishable. Prout had moved from Sydney, Simpkinson from England. Prout is more widely recognised than Simpkinson whose art is often forgotten. Like the early explorers who used the African body to symbolise difference, Prout and Simpkinson drew on exotic bodies from the Orient to represent Aborigines (see Fig. 10 and Fig. 11). They are dressed in European clothes and the captions describe them as being from Oyster Bay rather than their ostensible native tribes as Bock's portraits are named. Yet even though they acknowledge European influence, they remain realised through a veil of imagination like the early

³ Francis Guillemard Simpkinson only assumed the name de Wesselow in 1869 after receiving inheritance from that branch of the family (Angus 1984, 47) and hence will be referred to as Simpkinson as he was known when he was in Van Diemen's Land.

explorers' images. They broadly denote the Aborigines as racially and culturally Other rather than focusing on the distinctiveness of Aboriginal people and their culture.

In the early stages of exploration and settlement, portrayals of Tasmanian Aborigines varied in accord with prevalent beliefs, changing relations between the two cultures and the intended audience. Often represented to support preconceived notions of the Noble Savage, early depictions were frequently classicised and rendered appealing to a European eye. In coming to terms with and conveying apparent racial and cultural difference, Webber and Piron drew on European bodies while Petit, Prout and Simpkinson employed Oriental bodies which were already understood as Other. In a different manner, Lycett and Glover used the picturesque convention in their collective depictions to sequester the Aborigines from Europeans. It is within this context and amongst these artists that Duterrau's depictions of Aborigines emerged.

Chapter Two

TELLING THE STORY ON CANVAS: BENJAMIN DUTERRAU'S DEPICTIONS OF ABORIGINES

Duterrau's oil portraits and his renowned history painting *The Conciliation* reflect a unique response to the social climate of the 1830s in Van Diemen's Land.

Duterrau's individual oil portraits were the only large scale images of Aborigines created in Van Diemen's Land. Like Thomas Bock's portraits which included specific ethnographic details, Duterrau's drew on traditional Aboriginal customs and hence were not broadly classed as Other. However, the Noble Savage ideal and conceptualised projection that Tasmanian Aborigines were lower on the evolutionary scale, especially in terms of their allegedly 'primitive' culture, meant Duterrau's portrayals were still cloaked in imagination, realised largely through prevalent ideas. There are many contradictory elements to Duterrau's work which will be discussed throughout this chapter as I formally and theoretically examine Duterrau's oil and etched portraits. I will be considering both why and how Duterrau represented Tasmanian Aborigines. This, along with a comparison of Duterrau's and Bock's work, will highlight the complex nature of colonial portraiture. The latter half of this chapter is dedicated to examining Duterrau's painting *The Conciliation* (1840). This work is of particular significance since it is the only image which depicts Robinson 'conciliating' with Aborigines in Van Diemen's Land.

Duterrau's Outlook

Duterrau was sixty-five when he arrived in Van Diemen's Land in 1832. He appears to have been an evangelical man grounded in a firm set of moral beliefs. Starting in 1833 at the Hobart Mechanics Institute, Duterrau may have been the first to lecture about art in Australia,⁴ where he taught the "arrangement of composition" and "the harmony of colours" in art (*HTC*, 5 June 1835), as well the importance of art as the means to become "a truly civilized people" (*HTC*, 19 July 1833).⁵

In his lectures at the Hobart Mechanics Institute, Duterrau promoted shame as the motivating factor to make "wanton characters" in the colony turn towards refinement and "barbarous savages" turn towards Christianity (*Colonial Times and Tasmanian*, 17 July 1849; Smith 1975, 95). Duterrau seems to fit Bernard Smith's deduction that "the contrast between primitive and civilised life ... was at times adapted to present the native as a humble and docile child of nature awaiting the blessings of civilisation and Christianity" (Smith 1960, 166). Christian religion and 'civilisation' are thus seen as the only means to 'save' the 'barbarous' Aborigines. Duterrau preached: "Tis shame that makes a barbarous savage turn to be a good Christian, when the difference is clearly pointed out to him" (*Colonial Times and*

⁴ Bonyhady (1979, 104) asserts that "Duterrau is noted for having given the first lecture to the Hobart Mechanics Institute in 1833". However the Hobart Mechanics Institute was established in 1827 (Gibson 2001, 21; Petrow 1993) and records reveal Dr Ross lectured in 1830 two years before Duterrau arrived in Hobart (see *HTC*, 2 January 1830). Thus it most likely that Kolenberg & Kolenberg were right in their suggestion that Duterrau "gave what was probably the first lecture about art in the Australian colonies on 16th July 1833" (1987, 97). Records of the lectures at the Hobart Mechanics Institute prior to 1849 appear to have been lost. It is through newspaper reports, mainly in the *Hobart Town Courier*, that I have traced when and what Duterrau lectured about before 1849 – see Appendix B.

⁵ Duterrau may have learnt these principles through his brother-in-law Arthur Perigal, who was a history painter (Butler 1996, 229; Graves 1989, 107), and who lectured at the Manchester Royal Institute, where Samuel Prout and John Glover exhibited works in 1827 (Darcy 1976, 70). The Manchester Royal Institute held similar aims to the Hobart Mechanics Institute believing that the main function of art "was to 'civilise'" (Gibson 2001, 12) which may elucidate Duterrau's belief in art as a moralising agent.

Tasmanian, 17 July 1849; Smith 1975, 95). ‘The difference’ most likely referring to the ‘benefits’ of European technology and Christian values. Even in 1849, after Robinson’s mission had proven to be devastating with a high disease rate and many Aboriginal deaths at Wybalenna,⁶ Duterrau continued: “The Missionary duty has proved that good effect completely” (*Colonial Times and Tasmanian*, 17 July 1849; Smith 1975, 95). This suggests that he did not believe the Aboriginal deaths at Wybalenna were a result of Robinson’s actions. Instead, he most likely saw the deaths as a sad but inevitable part of the progress of humankind.

At the same time, however, his portraits of Aborigines reveal a respect for them and their culture. As will be revealed throughout this chapter, his artistic approach towards depicting Aborigines is considerate and commemorative. The complexity of Duterrau’s outlook will become apparent when comparing his portraits to Bock’s and discussing his oil portraits and *The Conciliation*.

Duterrau and Bock

Duterrau’s portraits are most often compared to Bock’s, his neighbour in Campbell Street, Hobart.⁷ Both artists created portraits of Aborigines adhering to the 1830s desire to preserve “a close resemblance of a race now all but extinct” (*HTC*, 20 December 1833). Bock’s portraits were commissioned by Robinson (Plomley 1991, 34), but in Duterrau’s case there is no record stating under whose request the sittings were organised – that is, whether Duterrau freely created the portraits or whether he did so at the encouragement of Robinson, who he believed to be a “real

⁶ This led the remaining 47 Aborigines to be transferred to Oyster Cove in Southern Tasmania in 1847.

⁷ Bock lived at 22 Campbell Street (Hannavy 2007, 169), Duterrau at 24 Campbell Street (*HTC*, 5 August 1836).

hero” (Duterrau quoted in Bonwick 1884, 135). Duterrau and Bock both sketched the ‘domesticated’ Aborigines brought to their studios by Robinson between 1832 and 1834 suggesting that there was at least some collaboration with Robinson. These were the Aborigines who aided Robinson on expeditions to corral the remaining ‘wild’ Aborigines from across Van Diemen’s Land. They were familiar faces in Hobart Town as they often stayed there with Robinson. However, after they were relocated to Flinders Island and no longer present amongst the community they became sources of intrigue making images of them desirable. Comparing Bock’s and Duterrau’s portraits clearly highlights how differently they responded to representing Aborigines.

In their portraits of Manalargenna for example, (Fig. 12 and Fig. 13), the hair, neck ornamentation and holding of a fire stick are similar but the build, size and background differ significantly. Robinson described Manalargenna as having “the nose of an Englishman” and that the only factor distinguishing him as Aboriginal was his skin colour (Plomley 1966, 724). Bock’s Manalargenna has a prominent nose which seems to fit Robinson’s description. In contrast, all of Duterrau’s portraits appear similar in physique, facial features and expression. Yet even though Duterrau’s portraits are less individualised than Bock’s, they have a greater living presence. The use of oil paint in Duterrau’s portraits evokes bold continuity while the vignette quality and use of watercolour in Bock’s portraits reflects the romantic assumption that Aborigines would slowly fade out of existence. Bock’s portraits embody what Margaret Maynard describes as “melancholy heroism” (1985, 96) as Aborigines passively accept their ‘doomed fate’. The absence of a background decontextualises them into a timeless sphere as symbols of a lost race.

By contrast, Duterrau's portraits resist this passive melancholy through the physical bulk of the Aboriginal subjects.

In Bock's portrait, Manalargenna's hand gently cups the fire stick in a staged pose, whereas Duterrau's Manalargenna is not trapped in a static pose but appears to be in motion, casually walking with his fire stick and spear. This conveys a realistic presence while Bock's appear flat and specimen-like. Duterrau's figures are given three-quarter length bodies in a near-life-size scale; the figures in Bock's portraits are only around 10cm tall. The immense scale is another element that enlivens Duterrau's figures giving them a greater presence than Bock's figures whose gently rest within a field of blank paper. The subtle indication of a smile through upturned lips also lends warmth and contentment to Duterrau's depictions. While Bock's convey a poignant solemnity, Duterrau's appear alive and sanguine. This could be seen as a result of Duterrau's credulous view that Robinson's work was beneficial to both Europeans and Aborigines as will be discussed when examining *The Conciliation* later in this chapter.

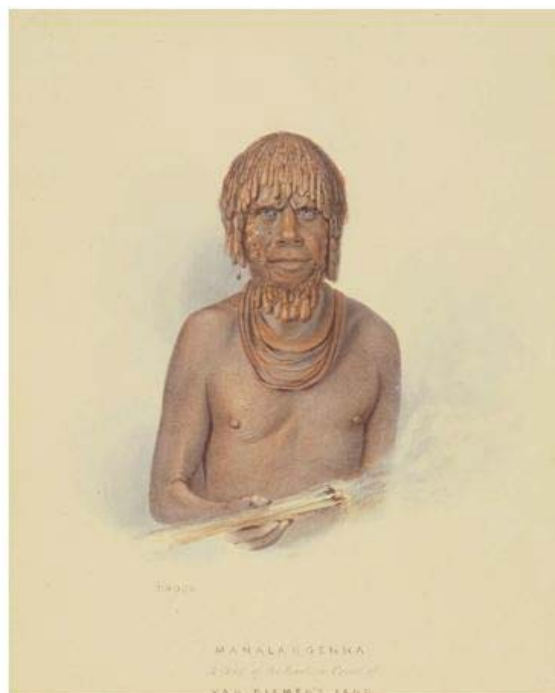


Figure 12: Thomas Bock, *Manalargenna, a Chief of the Eastern Coast of Van Diemen's Land*, 1837

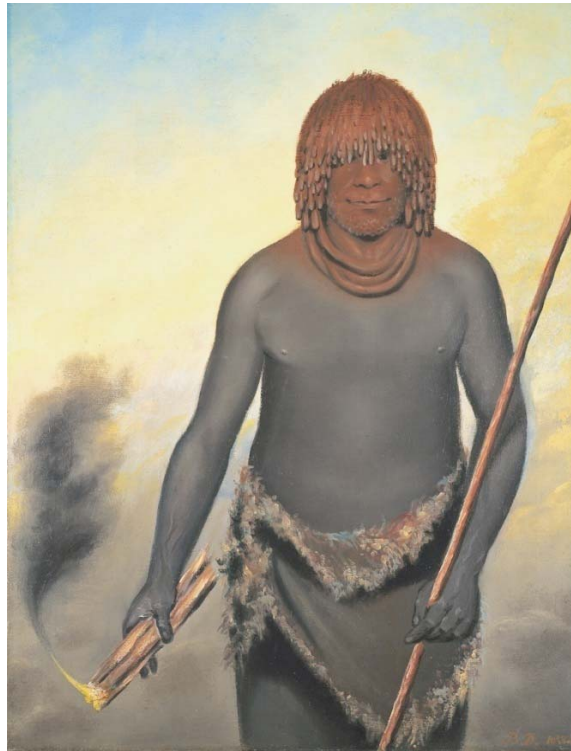


Figure 13: Benjamin Duterrau, *Manalargenna*, 1834

In recent studies Bock's portraits are often accepted as the most honest depictions because of a high level of individual detail (Plomley 1983, 40; Jones 1976, 6), yet at their time of creation Duterrau's were judged as the "most perfect likeness" by Governor Arthur (*HTC*, 20 December 1833). While Bock's works were popular amongst individual colonists, Duterrau's oil portraits gained widespread attention as is evidenced by a petition signed by 113 supporters which urged the government to purchase his four oil portraits of Truggernana, Woureddy, Tanleboueyer and Manalargenna.⁸ Most of the signatories were prominent social citizens and members of the Hobart Mechanics Institute where Duterrau frequently

⁸ These were some of the well-known 'domesticated' Aborigines who travelled with Robinson. Gilbert Robertson initially proposed the idea that "these paintings should be made colonial property" and displayed "in the Halls of Justice" in the *Colonist* (25 March 1834), however it was not until 1837 that the idea gained hold resulting in the petition.

lectured (Bonyhady 2000a, 18-9; see Appendix A). The petition insisted that the portraits be “preserv’d in some public place” (Index, 29 May 1837a) where they could be observed on a regular basis. The success of the petition hinged on the importance of Duterrau’s work in capturing the likeness of the Aborigines to serve as “a future memorial of the original inhabitants of Van Diemen’s Land” (*HTC*, 23 June 1837). The petition was well received and thus in 1837 Duterrau’s portraits became the first public purchase of art in Australia. The four portraits were hung publicly, as desired, in the Legislative Council Chambers and Duterrau was paid the healthy sum of eighty guineas, the price he had requested (Index, 29 May 1837b; Index, 6 June 1837). Despite the purchase by the government, Duterrau generally struggled to sell his portraits of Aborigines but nevertheless continued to create images of them.⁹ As Tim Bonyhady points out: “no other colonial artist pursued Australia’s Aborigines with so much enthusiasm and so little patronage” (2000a, 13).

Duterrau’s Oil Portraits of Aborigines

In considering the creation of Duterrau’s portraits of Aborigines the complexities of colonial portraiture need to be addressed. It is often assumed that portraits of Aborigines are a product of colonial exploitation that served an imperialist agenda. This view is put forth by art historian Richard Neville who asserts that “representations of Aborigines were under the control of Europeans, who used them to substantiate their own biases and misconceptions” (1992, 3-4). However,

⁹ Four months after the success of the public purchase of his work, Duterrau wrote to the government promoting the public purchase of six more of his works. This time, “A series of pictures representing the occupations & amusements of the Aborigines of Van Diemen’s Land’ totalling £220.10 (Index, 19 September 1837). The government did not support this purchase but Duterrau continued to depict Aborigines.

this stance maintains the victimisation narrative and bars any consideration of Aboriginal agency, neglecting to see that “Colonial perceptions and relations can take diverse forms” (Thomas 1994, 17).

As Leonarda Kovacic argues vis-a-vis colonial photography, Aboriginal people were often curious and interested to find out about what seemed new to them (2006, 98). Sitting for a portrait would have been a novel and perhaps exciting experience. Hence it is possible that Duterrau, who was not commissioned to create the portraits, did so at the request of the Aborigines who travelled with Robinson. This possibility is no less credible than the most common proposal that Duterrau depicted Aborigines out of personal interest. The Aborigines probably interacted with artists during the creative process as the sittings would have required cooperation. When the *Hobart Town Courier* reported that the Aborigines went to Duterrau’s studio and stood until he “took their likeness with the greatest satisfaction” (20 December 1833), could this have meant the satisfaction of the Aborigines? Were they pleased with their portraits and did they enjoy the process and interaction? Perhaps the jovial tone of Duterrau’s portraits reflects the amicable nature of the sittings. The possibility that Duterrau may have had good relations with the Aborigines he drew will be revisited when exploring a collection of his etchings later in this chapter.

Duterrau drew on the traditions of physiognomics and symbolism in his oil portraits of Aborigines. The determinant of physiognomy, studying character through physical appearance, was often used by portrait artists to provide an insight into the subject’s soul (Brilliant 1991, 76). In the case of Aborigines, however, physiognomics were often cited to support the ‘primitive’ state of Aborigines. For

example, William Buelow Gould illustrated his Aboriginal subjects as animal-like with low foreheads and “protruding jaws” (Reynolds 1989, 113) thus positing them as low on the evolutionary scale (see Fig. 14). Unlike Gould, however, Duterrau has not distorted the skulls or facial features in any way. He has instead reversed the physiognomics to elevate Aborigines to the level of Europeans. Contradictorily he promoted them as equals in their native state even though he labelled them “barbarous” (*Colonial Times and Tasmanian*, 17 July 1849). Perhaps Duterrau believed in their barbarous nature, but also believed they had the potential to elevate themselves as they innocently could not have known any better before European arrival. In *The Conciliation*, Ian McLean observes that Duterrau has given Timmy, the Aboriginal man Robinson is shaking hands with, a fully developed skull thus “confirm[ing] Robinson’s belief that the Tasmanian Aborigines were as intellectually developed as Englishmen” (1998, 43). Nevertheless, looking back at *The Conciliation* in 1911 when social evolutionary theory was dominant, Noelting argued that because the features of the Aborigines are idealised, “It is therefore pretty certain that [they] are not realistic” (1911, 135). Duterrau’s ennobling of the features also led Plomley to argue that his portraits are “of no value” to learn of the appearance of Tasmanian Aboriginal people (1983, 40). Whether this is true or not, his oil portraits are important to learn how contemporary theories influenced perceptions towards Aborigines and how these could be moulded to either lower or elevate their status, as seen in comparison with Gould’s illustration.



Figure 14: William Buelow Gould, *A Group of Aborigines, Van Diemen's Land*, 1830s (ca.)

The symbolism Duterrau employed draws on a long tradition of European portraiture. Duterrau translated the symbolism of using firearms and material possessions to signify social status across to Aboriginal objects. The Aboriginal men, Manalargenna (Fig. 13) and Woureddy (Fig. 17), hold spears and a firestick; the women, Truggernana (Fig. 15) and Tanleboueyer (Fig. 16), wear their traditional shell necklaces. As with clubs in gladiator sculptures and rifles in European portraiture, the spears symbolise strength and authority. The shell necklaces beautify the Aboriginal women and add a touch of exoticism. The necklaces and spears are also ethnographic which contributed to the favourable reception, albeit not commercial success, of Duterrau's portraits as one of the key features was that the Aborigines were represented in their "original state and costume" (*HTC*, 29 November 1833; *HTC*, 20 December 1833). Like the explorers' images of Aborigines, Duterrau's were both informative and visually appealing.



Figure 15: Benjamin Duterrau, *Truggernana*, 1834



Figure 16: Benjamin Duterrau, *Tanleboueyer*, 1834

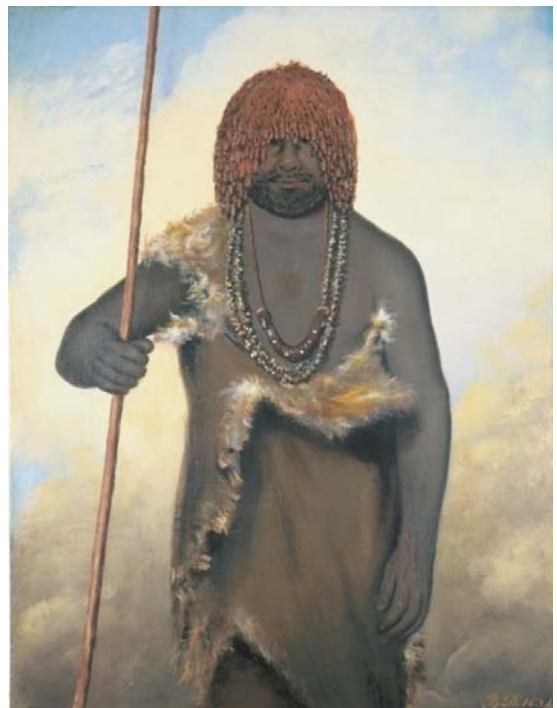


Figure 17: Benjamin Duterrau, *Woureddy*, 1834

All of the Aboriginal subjects dominate the pictorial space, and all are firmly centred. The clouds in the backgrounds of his oil paintings may have been a way of coming to terms with the Aborigines' dark skin, as Duterrau's portraits of Europeans (for example, Fig. 18), often have dark contrasting backgrounds. The lighter cloud backgrounds allow the Aboriginal subjects to stand out like the white Europeans do against dark backgrounds. The clouds may also symbolise the innocence and uncorrupted state of the Aborigines as Noble Savages or as childlike, awaiting the light of Christianity. In eighteenth-century Europe a sky backdrop was symbolically associated with heaven and righteousness such as in Elisabeth Vigee-Lebrun's self portrait (Fig. 19). In the nineteenth century clouds became central to Romantic thought (Galison 1997, 76), evoking mood and emotions as in John Constable's *Cloud Series* (1821-22). In the case of Duterrau's portraits, the cloud backdrop may also have been intended to commemorate the Aborigines' decision to follow Robinson. The Aborigines who made that decision were admired in Hobart Town because Robinson's mission was commonly perceived as kind and bloodless, and hence seen as the best outcome for Aborigines. As described in the *Colonist* (25 March 1834), they "have cheerfully followed their captor as benefactor all over the Colony – [their decision] thus affording a noble insistence of the superior force of kindness upon savages". Manalargenna and Tanleboueyer were warmly described in the *Hobart Town Courier* as "two of the most excellent well-disposed people, who, with the others, have been of immense service to Mr. Robinson" (December 20 1833). Viewers were positioned to greet Duterrau's oil portraits of Aborigines acquiescently for they served as dignified reminders of the 'last' Tasmanian Aborigines, no longer threatening, now saved by Robinson who would implant Christian and 'civilised'

values. Traditional Aboriginal culture would be visually preserved though its cessation would allegedly be the best outcome for Aborigines and Europeans.

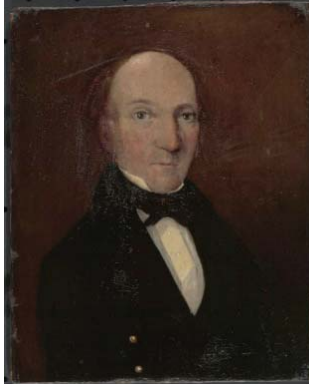


Figure 18: Benjamin Duterrau,
Portrait of Governor Arthur, 1832



Figure 19: Elisabeth Vigée-Lebrun,
Self-Portrait in a Straw Hat, after 1782

Duterrau's figures are not classicised to the extent of the early explorers' images, but they are presented as attractive and noble. Duterrau portrays them as having pride in their native state. Tanleboueyer (Fig. 16) has square shoulders and arms more muscular than Woureddy (Fig. 17) and Manalargenna (Fig. 13). Her breasts are barely evident and the cropped hair only contributes to the masculine tone of the image. She appears strong and bold with a confident smile and her hands cupped together in an evocatively regal pose. Conversely, Truggernana (Fig. 15) appears gentle and shy with her arms modestly wrapped around her tummy. Her shoulders are lower, appearing more relaxed, and her breast curves gently lead to the centre of the image. According to James Bonwick (1884, 141-42), Tanleboueyer "was superior to the other Natives both in person and intelligence", while Truggernana was the "Tasmanian belle". Hence, Tanleboueyer's masculine appearance can be read to denote her eminence, as men were perceptively more able than females at the time, while Truggernana's modest pose and shyness reflect her femininity.

A surface analysis of Duterrau's oil portraits of Aborigines suggests that the same treatment has been awarded to both male and female subjects. However, it soon becomes apparent that the women, Tanleboueyer and Truggernana, are represented on smaller canvases – around 20cm shorter in height and around 15cm smaller in width. This difference is subtle when viewing the paintings in the Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery (TMAG) as they are hung high, yet it indicates an inequality in value. Francette Pacteau claims that black women are “doubly marked with difference” (1994, 133) through their gender and skin colour. However, unlike many images of Aboriginal women, such as Thomas Bock's *Jenny* (Fig. 20) who is portrayed with an exposed breast, Duterrau's do not eroticise the Aboriginal women.



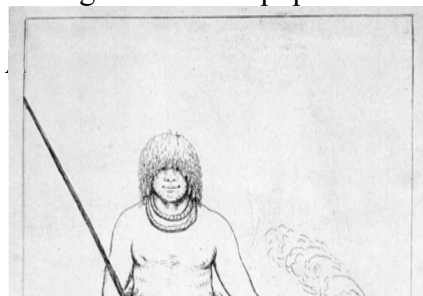
Figure 20: Thomas Bock, *Jenny, Wife of Timmy, Native of the Port Sorrell, Van Diemen's Land*, 1837

Duterrau's oil portraits of Manalargenna (Fig. 13) and Woureddy (Fig. 17) have a broad stature and similar physique to the women. They are both holding spears and Manalargenna also holds a fire stick. Bonwick compared Manalargenna to “a Hercules or a Jove” (1884, 142) and described Woureddy as having “the physique of an athlete” (1884, 142). To convey the strength and courage of a Hercules or a Jove, portraits and sculptures often depicted the subject in action with

bulging muscles. This is the case in some of Duterrau's other portraits, such as *Native Taking a Kangaroo*, and in *The Conciliation* which will be visited later in this chapter. The figures are in a fairly straight standing pose, yet this is a strong and confident stance that evokes a sense of power whilst still adhering to the conventions of high art portraiture. In Duterrau's portraits that depict the figure in action, the tone becomes ethnographic, representing Aboriginal cultural acts such as hunting. This is reflected in the titling, such as *Native Taking a Kangaroo* (1837). Instead, the four static oil portraits aim to imbue the Aboriginal subjects with dignity and independence as individual people. They commemorate how Tasmanian Aborigines were before European conquest, but also represent how they can no longer be as they accept Christianity and learn European values.

Duterrau's Etchings

Duterrau also created etchings of his oil-portrait subjects (see Fig. 21, Fig. 22, Fig. 23 and Fig. 24). The etchings are subtitled with a description of their tribal location, their subject's marital partner, and the date they were attached to Robinson's conciliation mission. For instance: *Tanleboueyer, A Native of the District of Oyster Bay & the Wife of Manalargenna, was attach'd to the Mission in 1830*. This suggests that they served an ethnographic documentary function. Michael Desmond (2009, 6) suggests that Duterrau sold the etchings to raise money for the proposed production of his national picture, now known in the form of *The Conciliation*. As discussed in Chapter One, small drawings of Tasmanian Aborigines became popular to send to family and friends in London as the



numbers.



Figure 21: Benjamin Duterrau, *Manalargenna*, 1835



Figure 22: Benjamin Duterrau, *Tanleboueyer*, 1835



Figure 23: Benjamin Duterrau, *Truggernana*, 1835

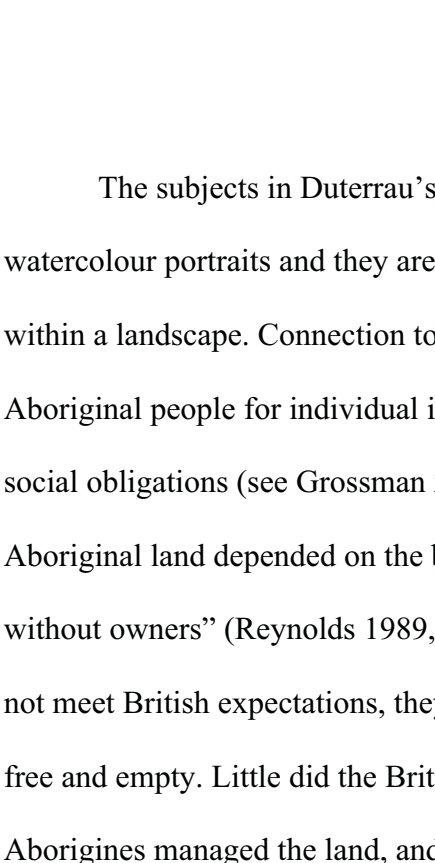
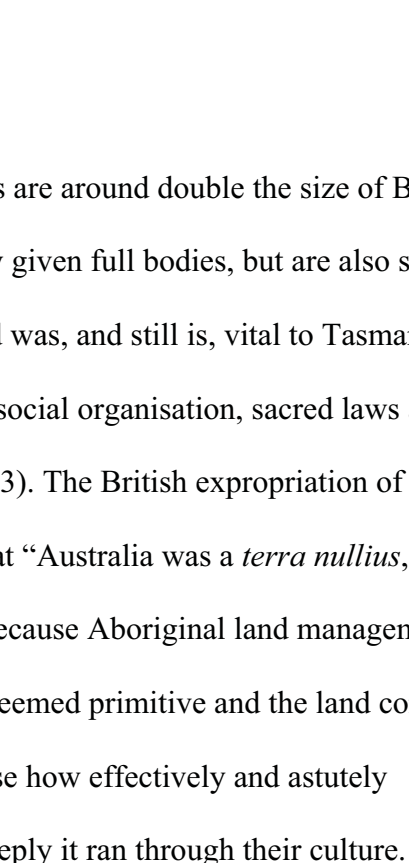


Figure 24: Benjamin Duterrau, *Woureddy*, 1835



The subjects in Duterrau’s etchings are around double the size of Bock’s watercolour portraits and they are not only given full bodies, but are also situated within a landscape. Connection to the land was, and still is, vital to Tasmanian Aboriginal people for individual identity, social organisation, sacred laws and other social obligations (see Grossman 2003, 173). The British expropriation of Aboriginal land depended on the belief that “Australia was a *terra nullius*, a land without owners” (Reynolds 1989, 173). Because Aboriginal land management did not meet British expectations, they were deemed primitive and the land considered free and empty. Little did the British realise how effectively and astutely Aborigines managed the land, and how deeply it ran through their culture.

Amongst the distant hills in the background of Duterrau's portrait etchings are small plumes of smoke that indicate Aboriginal presence within the landscape. Smoke signals had particular significance to Aboriginal people as they were used as communication to notify where other groups' camps were and to seek permission to visit areas (Clarke 2003, 41). As Bill Gammage identifies with other colonial landscape paintings (2002; 2006), Duterrau's straight landscape scenes show discernibly clear patches of land which allude to Aboriginal land management (for example see Fig. 25). It is unclear whether Duterrau was aware of these practices or whether he merely painted what he saw. Nevertheless, it can be seen that evidence of Aboriginal agency filters through some of Duterrau's images.



Figure 25: Benjamin Duterrau, *Hobart Town as Seen From the Top of Mount Nelson*, Design'd, etch'd & publish'd by Bn. Duterrau, 1836

In the portrait etchings, Duterrau has also positioned all of the Aboriginal subjects, and Robinson (Fig. 26), as roughly the same size which suggests equality in all of humankind. This is echoed in the equal height of Timmy and Robinson in

The Conciliation which will be discussed shortly. The figures all stand tall, firmly grounded in the land with their figures compositionally dominating. Although similar in setting, the land varies in each of the portraits conveying individuality to each person depicted. The bulky rock behind Woureddy and his dominant stance before it (Fig 24) bestows him with strength and confidence. Whereas, the flat ground on which Truggernana stands (Fig. 23) symbolises composed elegance, an integral trait of feminine beauty in Europe.



Figure 26: Benjamin Duterrau, *Mr G.A. Robinson*, 1835

Duterrau also created a series of etchings and pencil sketches which are bound in a volume now held in the Mitchell Library titled *The Aborigines of Tasmania, A Series of Original Etchings and Sketches of the Natives brought in by*

*the Conciliatory Mission under G. A. Robinson. Hobart Town, 1834-35.*¹⁰ It includes eight etchings and thirty-three pencil sketches of Aborigines making spears, dancing and posing for positions in *The Conciliation* (see Fig. 27). They are numbered rather than specifically titled and appear unlike renderings by any of Duterrau's contemporaries. The dancing figures (for example Fig. 29 and 30) are light-hearted and almost comical in appearance. They appear spontaneous, as if quickly drawn with little deliberation, like a stream of consciousness passage. Duterrau may have intended for these etchings to have an ethnographic documentary function, producing them to sell as a series or to include in a book as Bock's were intended. They appear to have been drawn inquisitively yet respectfully, presented as unthreatening and enchanting. The relaxed tone suggests that the Aborigines were at ease in Duterrau's presence and that he may have had some rapport with them.



Figure 27: Benjamin Duterrau, *Untitled*, 1834

¹⁰ Little is known about how this collection of images originated. In August 1934 it was purchased by the Mitchell Library from Maggs Brothers, London for £45. It was initially catalogued as a manuscript and then transferred to the Pictures collection in November 1977 (Holz, W. 2009, pers. Comm., 10 September).



Figure 28: Benjamin Duterrau, No.10, 1834-35



Figure 29: Benjamin Duterrau, No.3, 1834-35



Figure 30: Benjamin Duterrau, No.6, 1834-35

Duterrau went to great lengths to ensure his portraits would serve as memorials to the cultural traditions of Tasmanian Aborigines, even though he believed those traditions needed to be eradicated. Ironically, over time the portraits, which were

highly appreciated at their time of creation, have been neglected, and *The Conciliation*, which was poorly valued when it was created in 1840, after interest in Robinson and the last Aborigines had elapsed, has now become Duterrau's most famous work. While little has been written on Duterrau's portraits, especially his etchings, *The Conciliation* has been the focal point of debates and has been fervently scrutinised.

The Conciliation and its Creation

Duterrau's painting *The Conciliation* (1840) is unique in depicting a near life size group of Aborigines. As discussed in Chapter One, individual portraits were favoured, and when group portraits were painted they were often on a small scale portraying the Aborigines as part of the landscape living freely in nature without any signs of European interference, as in Glover's and Lycett's images. No other artist depicted such a large scale group image of Tasmanian Aborigines in the 1830s, especially not in the company of a European. Robinson is depicted unarmed surrounded by Aborigines holding spears. Yet because Robinson was known as 'the conciliator' and acted as a medium between the two cultures, the societal threat posed by the large scale group of Aborigines was thus mitigated. Duterrau explains that Robinson is depicted "conversing in a friendly manner with the wild natives which induced them to quit barbarous for civilised life" (*HTC*, 14 August 1835). Examining the context to the creation of *The Conciliation* and its reception illustrates the polemic nature of considering an artwork, especially one of such historical significance.

The Conciliation was never intended to be a grand painting in its own right. It was a sketch for a 'National Picture' which was, according to the inscription on the reverse of *The Conciliation*, to be much larger at fourteen by ten feet. The idea behind such a vast National Picture first appeared in *The Hobart Town Courier* on April 10 1835:

The circumstance of a few of the remaining Aborigines, now residing with Mr. Robinson, has suggested the idea among a number of gentlemen favourable to the undertaking, of grouping their portraits into a national picture, with Mr. Robinson in the midst mediating with them.

This picture would be hung in "some public situation where it could be frequently seen in one of the courts of justice" in order to "shew the advantage of mild and gentle treatment" (*HTC*, April 10 1835). As Bonyhady has detected (1979, 95-7), some of Duterrau's sketches for the National Picture are dated 1834, a year prior to the newspaper report. This suggests that the editorial was designed to provoke an interest in an image "which Duterrau had already planned and which he wished to execute with public support" (Bonyhady 1979, 95-7). Hence the newspaper reports are indicative of what Duterrau wanted to create.

The initial proposal for a National Picture was opposed by rival newspaper the *True Colonist* (17 April 1835) which believed that celebrating Robinson's alleged success would be incendiary and insulting to Tasmanian Aboriginal people. Gilbert Robertson, the editor of the *True Colonist*, declared that if such a National Picture were to be made it should be accompanied by an image representing "another never-to-be-forgotten" historical moment: the "dark history" of the unjust trial and hanging of Dick and Jack who were accused of committing murder (*True*

Colonist, 17 April 1835).¹¹ As with the earlier trial of Musquito and Black Jack¹² (see Harman 2008, 52-3), Robertson believed Dick and Jack were refused a translator and legal counsel.¹³ Thus, this accompanying picture would depict everyone in the court: the judge, the attorney-general, the jury, and the lawyers “at a time when not one volunteered to defend the poor savages” (*True Colonist*, 17 April 1835). Graphically, the background of this image would depict “the miserable Dick hoisted up on a stool, to have the fatal rope adjusted around his neck” (*True Colonist*, 17 April 1835). This strong reaction put forth in the *True Colonist* confirms that there were conflicting responses to Robinson’s ‘friendly mission’ and the Government’s treatment of Aborigines. Robertson often defended the Aborigines and acknowledged their plight, yet his confrontational responses to Governor Arthur’s policies were not appreciated.¹⁴

Despite the opposition of the *True Colonist*, Duterrau continued to plan and produce numerous etchings and sculptures in preparation for the National Picture.

¹¹ As discussed earlier, Robertson supported the public purchase of Duterrau’s four portraits of Aborigines but could not condone their grouping with Robinson. This may have been due to Robertson’s belief that he should have had Robinson’s role as he was the first to develop “a scheme for recruiting Aboriginal warriors ... to act as negotiators in a process of conciliating the Aborigines (Pybus 2008, 101). Hence he was bitter at the government’s praise of Robinson.

¹² Which Robertson believed “had been a catalyst for further attacks on settlers” (Pybus 2008, 100).

¹³ There is ambiguity surrounding the nature of this trial. Kris Harman has pointed out that Henry Melville’s account of the trial describes that Jack and Dick were appointed legal counsel and an interpreter unlike Musquito and Black Jack (Harman 2008, 54). However a newspaper report forty-five years after the trial states that “there is no detailed account extant” of the court case which lasted two days yet there are vivid descriptions of the hanging (*The Mercury*, 27 April 1872). It is hence unclear how the trial unfolded. Perhaps the promise of a translator and legal counsel was a facade that Robertson knew to be empty.

¹⁴ Robertson was “the bastard son of a Scottish plantation owner and his slave mistress” (Pybus 2008, 101). Because his skin was not white he was regarded with suspicion even while he was chief constable at Richmond. He often landed himself in trouble with the government. For instance, on the 11th of March 1835 the *True Colonist* published that Robertson was found guilty for “a false and malicious libel, tending to bring into contempt the Lieutenant Governor and the Government of this Island”.

In 1836 an article in the *Hobart Town Courier* (12 August) declared that Duterrau had created thirteen bas reliefs as follows:¹⁵

1. Mr. Robinson, in his bush dress.
2. Manalargenna, the Chief
3. Tanleboueyer, Wife of the Chief
4. Woureddy, a native of Brune [now known as Bruny] Island.
5. Truggernana, Wife of Woureddy
6. Credulity
7. Anger
8. Surprise
9. Suspicion
10. Cheerfulness
11. Incredulity
12. Attention
13. The manner of straightening a spear

Each of these bas reliefs denote a “particular passion” (*HTC*, 12 August 1836) that is replicated in the figures in *The Conciliation*. It was understood that Aborigines “stood for every attitude in the picture” (*HTC*, 23 June 1837). In the collection of etchings discussed earlier, *The Aborigines of Tasmania, A Series of Original Etchings and Sketches of the Natives brought in by the Conciliatory Mission under G. A. Robinson. Hobart Town, 1834-35*, there is a document

¹⁵ Only ten of these bas reliefs (all except for *Mr Robinson in his Bush Dress*, *Credulity* and *Tanleboueyer*) are known of today and are housed in the Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery.

describing a plan for the National Picture (see Fig. 31), presumably written by Duterrau, which describes the depiction of different responses to Robinson's offer.

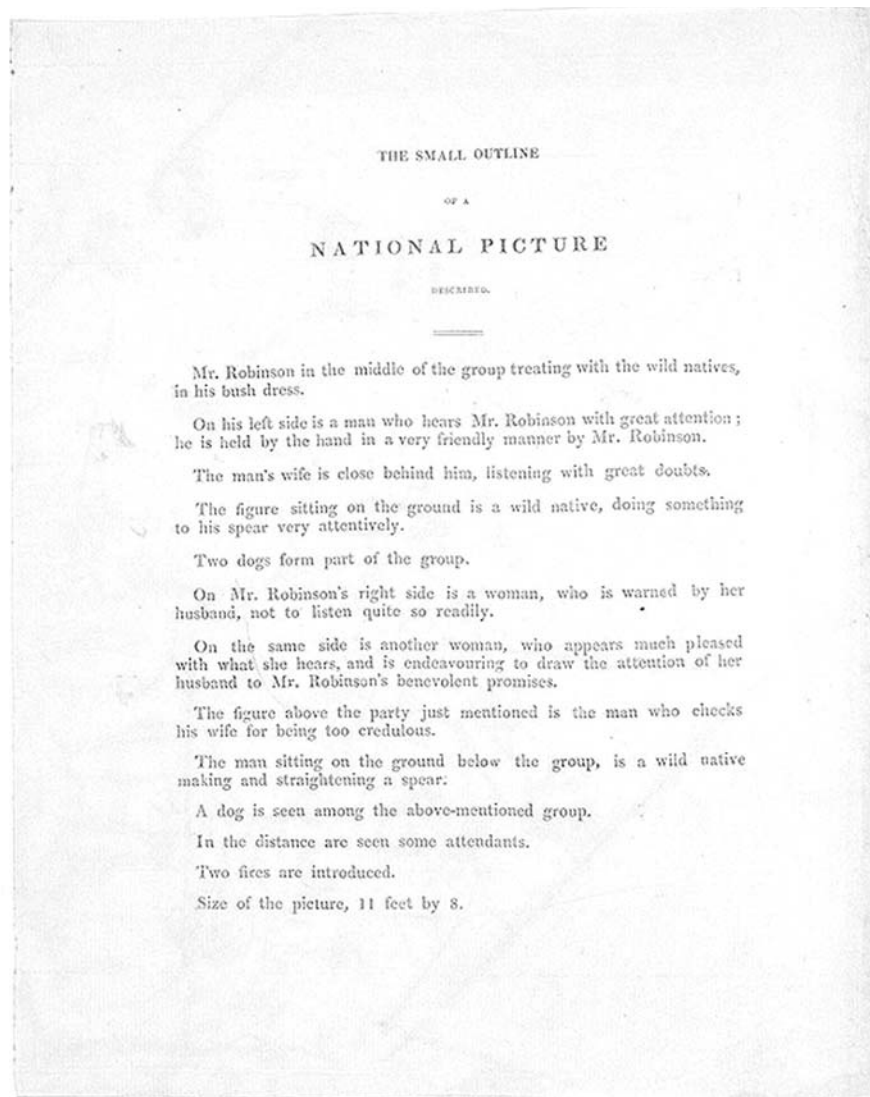


Figure 31: Attributed to Benjamin Duterrau, *The Small Outline of a National Picture*, 1835 (ca.)

The different emotional reactions imply that the Aborigines did not accept Robinson's offer lightly as they were emotionally and judiciously able. For example, Timmy, the Aboriginal man shaking Robinson's hand, signifies incredulity (see Fig. 32 and Fig. 33) which suggests hesitation over Robinson's offer.



Figure 32: Benjamin Duterrau, *Incredulity*, 1835



Figure 33: Benjamin Duterrau, *The Conciliation* (detail), 1840

In a public lecture, *The School of Athens as it Assimilates* (1849),¹⁶ Duterrau described the characters in Raphaelle's painting, *The School of Athens* (Fig. 34), and their actions, noting that "some appear joyous and satisfied with understanding the scheme clearly, others very anxiously investigating the subject profoundly ..."
(Duterrau cited in Smith 1975, 94). This seems evocative of what Duterrau wanted to achieve in *The Conciliation* with each figure associated with a passion.

¹⁶ This lecture, 'The School of Athens as it Assimilates' is recorded in full in the *Colonial Times and Tasmanian* 17 July 1849, and in Bernard Smith's *Documents on Art and Taste in Australia* (1975, 88-96).



Figure 34: Raphael, *The School of Athens*, 1510 (ca.)

Christopher Allen believes that Duterrau learnt of the importance of facial expression through Charles Le Brun's influential theory on the passions, *Conference sur l'expression générale et particulière* (1669) (Allen 1997, 35). Le Brun promoted the notion that expression "is a necessary Ingredient of all the parts of the painting, and without it no Picture can be perfect" (as cited in Harrison, Wood & Gaiger 2000, 132). Le Brun saw the face as the key to expressing the passions. This complicated the nature of portraiture which relied upon neutral features to convey dignity and concentration, but was eagerly adopted by history painters who employed the passions to animate the figures in paintings of "war, death and acts of heroism" (West 2004, 34). For example, Theodor Gericault's *The Raft of the Medusa* (Fig. 35), exhibited in London in 1820 (Altick 1978, 409), employed the passions to ignite an emotional response in the viewer and enliven the historical act. Some of the figures are angry, others are sad, one is contemplative. Outstretched arms lead to the highest figure, just as outstretched

arms in *The Conciliation* lead to Robinson. Like Duterrau, Géricault was not commissioned to create this painting, he simply chose a well-known event from recent history that would spark public interest and launch his career (Lourve 2009), exactly as Duterrau attempted.



Figure 35: Théodore Géricault, *Raft of the Medusa*, 1819

Paul Paffen (2001, 59) extends Allen's proposal to suggest that Benjamin Ralph's book *The School of Raphael* (1759) may have also influenced Duterrau's interest in the passions. Ralph's text employed Raphael's *Cartoons* to study the passions and increased Le Brun's list of passions from twenty to fifty-three. In one of his self portraits, Duterrau is shown holding a portfolio clearly titled 'Rafaelle's Cartoons' (Fig. 36) which indicates that he was familiar with the *Cartoons*, possibly in conjunction with Ralph's text.

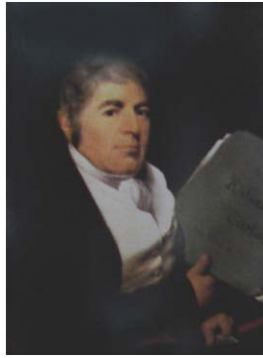


Figure 36: Benjamin Duterrau, *Self Portrait*, 1837

In addition, Allen believes Duterrau may have been inspired by Richard Payne Knight's theory (1801) that due to being "unperverted and unrestrained", savages were more capable of expressing "the sentiments of the mind" than civilised people (Allen 1997, 35-6; Payne Knight 1805, 208). This sentiment relates back to the idea of the Noble Savage who is in tune with their emotions and open to ecstatic experiences (Torgovnick 1998, 210).

The view that Duterrau gave his Aboriginal subjects individual expression is also reflected in Fritz Noelting's analysis of *The Conciliation* (1911) which values the painting for its alleged ethnographic and historical data. Noelting uses *The Conciliation* to describe the reactions of male and female Aborigines to Robinson's invitation even though he believes that the figures are idealised. Noelting believes *The Conciliation* reveals that "the females are convinced, and ready to accept the new doctrine. The men, with one exception only, are either indifferent or directly hostile, attempting to restrain the females" (1911, 135-36). However, the Aboriginal women in *The Conciliation* are not representative of how Aboriginal women reacted to Robinson's offer, but of how Duterrau perceived, and wanted to present, those particular women and their relationship to Robinson.

In the *Hobart Town Courier*, Duterrau argued that “A work of such magnitude as the national picture, requires invention, composition, expression, and strong general effect, all of which is completely arranged” (23 June 1837). Thus, as well as expression, composition was also seen as vital to the success of the image. This probably accounts for the numerous sketches Duterrau planned for the National Picture. There are subtle differences in each of these sketches.



Figure 37: Benjamin Duterrau, *Small Outline for a National Picture*, 1835



Figure 38: Benjamin Duterrau, *Small Outline for a National Picture*, 1835

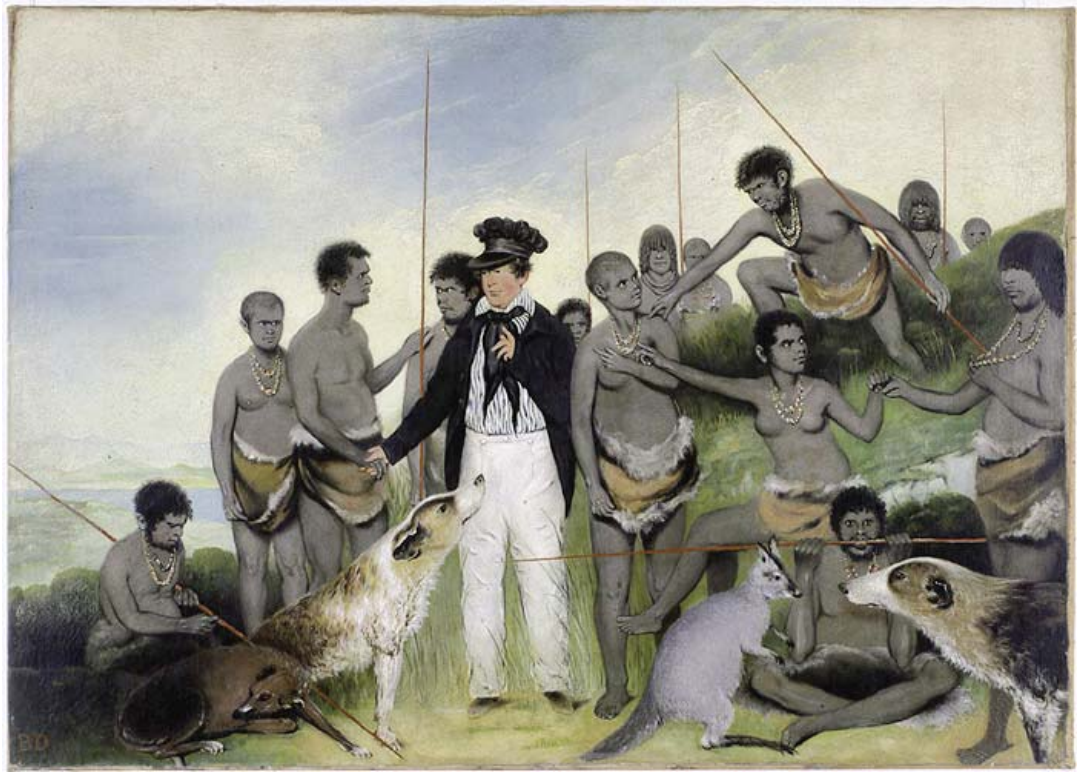


Figure 39: Benjamin Duterrau, *The Conciliation*, 1840

There is no kangaroo¹⁷ in the early sketches, (see Fig. 37 and Fig. 38), and there are two small fires in the foreground that were not carried through to *The Conciliation* (Fig. 39). The central figures are the same, yet there are more figures added in the background of *The Conciliation*. The added kangaroo meeting with a dog in *The Conciliation* strengthens the conciliation theme while the added figures intensify the importance of the scene. In each edition Robinson stands roughly in the centre of the image. In *The Conciliation* his warm pink hands and cheek advance to the viewer and draw the focal attention. The woman reaching her arm

¹⁷ The native animal in *The Conciliation* appears to be a wallaby, yet the differences between the two animals were not acknowledged when Duterrau was painting, thus I use the term kangaroo as it was then known. Other images of Duterrau's, such as *Native Taking a Kangaroo* (1837), also depict wallabies.

across, and the man reaching over, have a bold stature that Bonyhady believes was probably inspired by the ‘Borghese Gladiator’ (Fig. 40), copies of which gained immense popularity during the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, and adorned many English households when Duterrau was living in England (Bonyhady 1986, 80). The passions, the composition and the allusion to a heroic Greek sculpture ensured that Duterrau’s planned National Picture would conceptually sit well within the traditions of history painting.



Figure 40: Agasias of Ephesus, *The Borghese Gladiator*, 100BC (ca.)

Despite the immense planning, Duterrau did not enjoy fruitful success from his history painting. *The Conciliation* was produced in 1840, five years after the initial National Picture proposal. Robinson had left Flinders Island in 1839 and moved to Port Phillip and “His departure marked the end of a vision, the saving of the Tasmanian race” (Plomley 1966, 386). Thus interest in celebrating Robinson’s achievements lapsed. Bonyhady believes that the sale of the *Hobart Town Courier* in 1837 also affected Duterrau’s plans for a National Picture as the support of Duterrau’s work ceased when William Gore Elliston took over as editor (1979,

101).¹⁸ It is unclear what happened to the full scale National Picture Duterrau had planned. Stephen Scheduling dedicated a book to this very quest titled *The National Picture* (2002), and concluded that the picture did exist but that its current whereabouts remain unknown. Duterrau optimistically or perhaps more accurately, naively, wanted to believe that Robinson had performed great work that benefited both communities, Aboriginal and European. He probably saw the deaths on Flinders Island as a ‘natural’ result of evolution, rather than a culmination of enforced Christian beliefs, mourning for land and culture, confinement and disease.

While the National Picture, if it was realised, remains lost or was destroyed, *The Conciliation* is acknowledged as the first history painting in Australia. The actual content of the image is unclear and contentious. As Bonyhady describes, “there is no indication whether it was intended to represent a specific group of Aborigines” (1988, 76). In the aforementioned, “A Small Outline of a National Picture” (Fig. 31) the figures are not named. West (1971 [1852], 307) describes it as representing the meeting between Robinson and the Big River and Oyster Bay tribes that occurred on the 31st of December 1831. This moment came to be known as ‘the conciliation’. However, the Aborigines in *The Conciliation* are not of the Big River or Oyster Bay tribes; they are the ‘domesticated’ Aborigines that Duterrau sketched in his studio. Thus *The Conciliation* does not appear to represent ‘the conciliation’ of 1831, but a general meeting of the two cultures. Duterrau only arrived in Hobart in 1832 after ‘the conciliation’ had taken place. Duterrau also believed that historical events could be portrayed abstractly for “painting, like poetry, is not confined to strict historical truth – a plausible or probable appearance

¹⁸ Elliston signed the petition to purchase Duterrau’s oil portraits of Aborigines and hence he may have supported Duterrau’s work. However, his motivation for signing the petition, and his thoughts on Duterrau, do not seem to be recorded.

is sufficient, and frequently gives great force to the effect ...” (Duterrau in his 1849 lecture: *Colonial Times and Tasmanian* 17 July 1849; Smith 1975, 93). In contrast to written accounts which can detail a sequence of moments, history paintings must suspend a moment of action as “the artist has to condense successive actions into a single image, generally a moment of climax” (Burke 2001, 143). When Duterrau proposed his outline for the National Picture and explained that Robinson would be shown conversing with the “wild” natives, he probably meant that the now ‘domesticated’ Aborigines were ‘wild’ before meeting Robinson. As in *Mr Robinson’s First Interview with Timmy* (1840), the Aboriginal man Robinson is shaking hands with in *The Conciliation* is Timmy, not the leader of the Oyster Bay Tribe, Toterlongter, or the leader of the Big River tribe, Montpeilliatter. Scheduling proposes that Robinson may have suggested for Duterrau to use Timmy as a central figure as Duterrau probably would not have had the opportunity to sketch any members of the Big River or Oyster Bay tribes (2002, 205-06). Scheduling believes that because Timmy was not very well known amongst the settlers that he may have been able to represent another Aboriginal group such as the Big River tribe. However this does not explain why Duterrau would title one of his conciliation paintings, *Mr Robinson’s First Interview with Timmy*, instead of something along the lines of ‘Robinson’s Interview with an Aborigine/ a Native’. I agree with Bonyhady that *The Conciliation* is mainly concerned with representing the “Aboriginal and British nations” meeting (1988, 76).

Forgotten in its day, *The Conciliation* has since gained widespread attention, adorning the cover of several books and appearing alongside most discussions of Robinson. How *The Conciliation* and Duterrau’s portraits are seen today greatly affects the perception of early race relations in Tasmania. The next chapter will

explore the significance of Duterrau's work in a contemporary context, considering what value and meaning his portrayals of Aborigines hold in the present day.

Chapter Three

OF ENDURING IMPORTANCE: VIEWING BENJAMIN DUTERRAU'S WORK TODAY

N.J.B. Plomley dismisses Duterrau's work because it arguably does not accurately reveal the physical characteristics of Tasmanian Aborigines. Similarly, Tim Bonyhady maintains that all of Duterrau's depictions are "unsuccessful as records of the Aborigines' clothing, physiognomy or skin colour" (1988, 76). Yet there is far more to be valued in Duterrau's work than physiognomic likeness and ethnographic information. This chapter will consider how Duterrau's portraits and *The Conciliation* can be read today. I will begin by analysing responses to *The Conciliation* and its use in historical studies. I will then explore how Duterrau's portraits have been positioned in exhibitions and how they have been used by modern day artists to encourage new interpretations.

Reading *The Conciliation*

Critical analysis of *The Conciliation* began in 1911 with German ethnographer Fritz Noelting. To Noelting, *The Conciliation* endorsed the belief that the Aborigines and European-settlers would live together in harmony. Noelting's view presumably stemmed from the *Hobart Town Courier*'s declaration that a National Picture would "cause a respect for the life of man, whether black or white" (*HTC*, 10 April 1835). In racist tone, Noelting describes *The Conciliation* as:

a curious illustration of the sentiments prevailing in 1835. Everybody presumed that henceforth black and white, Europeans and Tasmanian aborigines, would live as brothers and sisters in one united 'nation' ... It is

regrettable that the intensely interesting Tasmanian race took such a sad and untimely end, but in the interest of the purity of the white race it is perhaps better so (1911, 135).

Noelting seems to have missed the apparent contradiction that a National Picture, which would depict black and white living together in harmonious unity, would also celebrate the “white posterity of Van Diemen's land” (*HTC*, 10 April 1835), thus revealing that the philanthropic view put forth in the *Hobart Town Courier* was still grounded in a discourse of supremacy.

The utopian projections of *The Conciliation* continue to spark concerns although now for different reasons. Many recent critics condemn the painting because it was created in 1840 after Robinson's work on Flinders Island had proved to be devastating and some of the Aboriginal subjects in the painting had died. *The Conciliation* promotes a sense of egalitarianism, implying that Aborigines and European settlers had come to a mutual agreement that benefited both communities. Historian Henry Reynolds reveals that the Aborigines perceived themselves as “free people” rather than prisoners (1995, 159). Despite this, the high death rate and isolation of Aborigines led to a widespread view of Wybalenna as an evil “death camp” (Ryan in Thomas, film 1992). Tasmanian Aboriginal activist Darlene Mansell describes Robinson's and Governor Arthur's promise to care for the Aborigines at Wybalenna as “one of the biggest lies in the history of Tasmania” (quoted in Perkins, film 2008). Through this lens *The Conciliation* has been labelled “false” (Bonyhady 1979, 104) and “propagandistic” (Broughton 1993, 17) for its promotion of peace and equality at a time when there is now believed to have been little.

According to Jeanette Hoorn, *The Conciliation* is not only “a misrepresentation of history” (2007, 90), but also “kitsch” as it conforms to Milan Kundera’s definition that kitsch excludes “everything that is difficult to come to terms with and, in its place, presents a sanitised version” (Hoorn 2007, 90-1). *The Conciliation* appears ‘sanitised’ for Hoorn because it evades the suffering that Tasmanian Aboriginal people were enduring at Wybalenna when the painting was made. But it is often forgotten that the idea of a National Picture was put forth in 1835 when Robinson’s ostensibly gentle and bloodless mission seemed the most promising outcome for Tasmanian Aborigines. Furthermore, *The Conciliation* did not hold a powerful influence at the time of its creation in 1840. It was not propagandistic, but apathetically ignored for many years. *The Conciliation* was displayed privately after Duterrau’s death, rather than its intended public display, until it was sold to the Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery (TMAG) in 1945 (Scheding 2002, 87).

In recent years, *The Conciliation* has been read in many different ways to support different perceptions of Duterrau and Robinson. Historians have differently identified figures in the painting to corroborate particular readings. For example, Suvenrini Perera examines different historians’ views of Truggernana noting that Viviane Rae-Ellis identifies Truggernana as the woman reaching across the painting, whereas Lyndall Ryan identifies Truggernana as the woman whose head is only just apparent behind Robinson (see Perera 1996, 403-05). Perera argues that Ryan identifies a figure of Truggernana that “destabilises the foundational status of *The Conciliation*” by showing that Truggernana was not the key to Robinson’s ‘success’. On the other hand, Perera suggests that Rae-Ellis identifies a figure of Truggernana that evokes her disloyalty in urging her fellow Aboriginal people to

join Robinson (1996, 404). Consistent with this view, but with a different interpretation of who Rae-Ellis identifies as Truggernana, Ryan asserts that Rae-Ellis “denies white responsibility” for the removal of the Tasmanian Aborigines (1996, xxv). Instead of seeing Rae-Ellis’ Truggernana as the woman reaching across the painting (Perera 1996, 404), Ryan declares in *The Aboriginal Tasmanians* (1996, xxv) that Rae-Ellis “mistakenly identifies” Truggernana as the figure “standing next to Robinson, seductively enticing the Big River people to give themselves up”. The identification of different figures as Truggernana highlights the contingencies in reading historical artworks. Figures can be selected, named and described to suit particular readings. Another possible interpretation of *The Conciliation* is that Truggernana is not depicted at all, if the painting is read to only represent the Big River and Oyster Bay tribes.¹⁹

How the handshake between Robinson and Timmy has been viewed also underlines the different ways in which the image may be read. Perception of the handshake is fundamental to reading *The Conciliation*. As Lindsay Broughton has observed, the handshake is the focal point of the painting, located in the centre with a sharp tonal contrast (1993, 17). Bonyhady believes that Robinson “holds” rather than shakes Timmy’s hand (1988, 76), yet to Rhys Jones it is a “sturdy handshake ... as black thanks white” (1976, 6). According to Geoff Parr (1985, 500), whose views will be elaborated on later in this chapter, the handshake is “one of the most treacherous [gestures] in [Australia’s] short history” and Duterrau’s depiction of it is dogmatic. I agree with Bonyhady that the handshake is not “sturdy” but rather a

¹⁹ Truggernana was a member of the Nuenonne clan of the Bruny Island and the D’Entrecasteaux Channel area.

loose hold. It appears hesitant which most likely relates back to Timmy being portrayed to represent the 'passion' incredulity.

These conflicting interpretations indicate that *The Conciliation* is a multifaceted painting interlaced with many possible narratives which I believe elevates its value as it allows for broader reconstructions of the past.

Lasting Memorials or Fallacious Portrayals

Duterrau's oil portraits of Aborigines also reflect a mosaic of views as a debate between Bonyhady and Hoorn demonstrates. Bonyhady is critical of *The Conciliation* and Duterrau's beliefs, but suggests that the portraits may serve as memorials to the Aboriginal dead. For Hoorn, however, the portraits should not be seen as commemorative for they are fallacious portrayals intended to sustain a myth of racial extinction.

In the catalogue essay to the 2000 exhibition *Heads of the People*, and in a related newspaper article, Bonyhady proposed that Duterrau's four oil portraits of Aborigines are central to the inquiry sparked by Reynolds in *The Other Side of the Frontier* (1981) over the dearth of Aboriginal memorials. Bonyhady observed that Reynolds and other Australian historians have based their inquiries on the assumption that colonists did not commemorate any aspect of the frontier wars (Bonyhady 2000b, 3). This assumption was driven by a preoccupation with written sources that dismissed artworks as credible historical evidence. As discussed in Chapter One and Two, artworks were often made to commemorate Aborigines believed to be the last, especially in 1830s in Van Diemen's Land. In a lecture on facing up to Australia's past (William Oats Memorial Lecture 2009), Reynolds opined that European settlers refused to perpetuate the memory of the prior owners

of the country. However, this assertion is sharply contradicted by the celebration of Duterrau's portraits for "fixing on canvas [that] which may commemorate and hand down to posterity for hundreds of years to come so close a resemblance" of the Tasmanian Aborigines (*HTC*, 20 December 1833). Thus, as Bonyhady concludes, in Duterrau's portraits "Hobart boasted Australia's first Aboriginal memorial" (2000b, 3).

Memorials are the result of collective consent in remembrance of an event, person, or people. As James Young describes, memorials only work as national historical narratives with "the explicit cooperation of the people" (2003, 242). Duterrau's portraits were made with public support as evident in the petition of 113 signatures that led to their purchase. Whether the portraits may still function as memorials today is another matter. Hoorn declares that "If we accept Tim Bonyhady's argument ... that these are examples of memorialising Aboriginal peoples who have died since white contact, then we are in troubled waters" (2007, 93-4). In Hoorn's view, Duterrau's portraits should not be celebrated because they were "painted while his subjects languished in detention and were dying" (2007, 93-4). Hoorn believes that the postulated fading of the Aborigines was a self-fulfilling prophecy: "By incarcerating a whole nation like in Tasmania in the 1830s there was a very good chance the colonists would be correct" and the Aborigines would die out (2007, 94). For Hoorn the portraits were an integral part of this process, sustaining the myth of racial extinction. This view has recently been reaffirmed by the Tasmanian Aboriginal Centre (TAC) in response to the listing for

sale of Benjamin Law's busts (1835-36),²⁰ leading to a reassessment of the place of colonial images of Aborigines in contemporary society.

The TAC maintains that Law's busts are not art but "images of the dead associated with a racist plan to exterminate a people" (cited by Michelle Paine 2009). Like Hoorn's view of Duterrau's portraits, the TAC believes Law's busts were intended to celebrate the triumph of the white race. However, the views of the TAC cannot be reduced to being representative of the whole Tasmanian Aboriginal community; they are but one perspective. Colonial artworks that involve relations between Europeans and Aborigines incite personal and impulsive emotional responses that do not necessarily reflect consensual opinion.

In the 1970s Duterrau's work was exhibited in the fashion the TAC justifiably detests as visual evidence of the appearance of the 'last' Tasmanians. In the 1976 exhibition *The Tasmanian Aborigine in Art*, curator Rhys Jones declared in the accompanying catalogue essay that "Here in this small exhibition of a few faces, we are looking at an entire people" (1976, 2). The exhibition was arranged in memory of the 100 year anniversary of Truggernana's death and occurred in a context where there was a greater awareness and acknowledgement of the destructive consequences of European settlement on Aboriginal culture.²¹ Yet while the 1976 exhibition, *The Tasmanian Aborigine in Art*, was conceived with good intentions as part of facing up to the atrocities of Tasmania's colonial past, it

²⁰ Benjamin Law created several pairs of painted plaster busts depicting Truggernana and Woureddy which are housed in museums and private collections all over the world. In August 2009 one pair of these busts that had been on loan to the TMAG for twenty-six years was listed for sale at Sotheby's auction house (Carter 2009).

²¹ During the 1970s, the Whitlam government (1972-75) changed understandings of Aboriginal identity and teaching Aboriginal history and culture became embedded into school curriculum (Markus 2001, 21). Consequently, a greater awareness arose of the number of Aborigines who had died from frontier contact.

is now seen in a negative light in terms of sustaining the myth of racial extinction. The view that Truggernana was the last Tasmanian Aborigine is offensive to Tasmanian Aborigines who are eager to dispel this myth and discourage the use of images that may perpetuate it. TAC spokesperson Sarah Maynard asserts that the image of Truggernana “provides a racist image that there is no continuing Aboriginal culture in Tasmania” (in Pearson 2009). Combined with the Aboriginal belief that “it is offensive to display images of dead Aborigines without the consent of their family or the community” (*The Mercury*, 25 August 2009), the TAC insist that Benjamin Law’s busts “should not be out of Aboriginal hands” (cited in Glaetzer 2009).

So what does this mean for Benjamin Duterrau’s portraits of Truggernana, Woureddy, Manalargenna and Tanleboueyer? Should they too be returned to the Tasmanian Aboriginal community? After all, like Law’s busts, they depict Truggernana and were created to visually record the ‘last’ Tasmanian Aborigines.

I believe that Duterrau’s portraits, like all colonial portraits of Aborigines, record an important eyewitness account in response to the social climate in which they were produced. They should not be dismissed simply because they evoke a time that is difficult to confront, seen to be scarred with colonial exploitation. While there were undoubtedly many colonists who felt relief at the decline in numbers of Aborigines and relished in the supposed triumph of the white race, it is also likely that there were people who genuinely felt remorse and sorrow towards the perceived last Aborigines: Gilbert Robertson, for one, could not bear to celebrate ‘the white posterity’ of Van Diemen’s Land as revealed in Chapter Two. To believe all contact was marred with conflict advocates a parochial view of enmity.

According to James Bonwick, Duterrau “shed tears over the fate of his black friends” and was “angelic in [his] display of brotherhood” (1884, 135). Bonwick insists that Duterrau “strongly excited [his] sympathetic impulses”, encouraging him to set down the “sad tale” in words as Duterrau had done so on canvas (1884, 135). Bonwick promoted the Noble Savage ideal, reminiscing on the “sweet vales and moonlight glades, so long owned by the dark race in a careless glee” before European arrival (1884, 2). Bonwick is one of the closest contemporary links to Duterrau. However, he wrote *The Lost Tasmanian Race* (1884) in a highly nostalgic tone after Duterrau had passed away and the Aborigines were believed to be extinct, thus his views could afford to be romanticised. Nevertheless, I believe Duterrau’s portraits were produced with a genuine concern to enshrine respectful images of Tasmanian Aborigines and their traditional culture. In the petition to publicly acquire Duterrau’s portraits, they were prized for commemorating the culture and customs of the Tasmanians.

The concern of racial extinction was more about the symbolic death of Aboriginal culture which was seen as a necessary step towards their betterment, rather than the literal death of the people. This reflects the ambiguity of Duterrau’s work. He appears to respect Aboriginal culture and portrays them on a large scale with a living presence, yet also preaches that they must become “good Christians”, that they must sacrifice, but not completely forget their culture, in order to move forward in the scale of human progress. The petition proclaims that Tasmanian Aborigines as a race may become extinct due to “the civilisation they are daily acquiring at their present settlement”, hence making it “desirable for the sake of future generations” to preserve a likeness of their “native state” (Index, 29 May 1837b). Thus the Aborigines are depicted with traditional clothing and cultural

artefacts such as firesticks, jawbone and shell necklaces, and ochred hair. There is no mention of them ‘dying out’ in this document. This may have been euphemistic, but it may also have reflected a belief that they may prosper and eventually become assimilated into so-called ‘civilised’ society.

Reynolds asserts that colonists “often regretted the loss of life, but rarely referred to the irretrievable loss of culture” (2001, 177). The petition for Duterrau’s portraits is compelling proof that colonial attitudes towards Aborigines were marked by ambivalence with a network of complex and uncertain views. There were most likely those who felt a genuine humanitarian concern over the fate of the Aborigines; those who felt relief; those who were eager to romantically lament their decline; those who were determined to salvage traces of their culture only on the verge of their extinction, and those who spitefully despised every aspect of their being. Duterrau’s portraits sit within this ambivalence. It is reductive to believe solely that they were an integral part of colonial propaganda. Rather they are important historical texts that add new dimensions to understanding colonial ideologies and relations with Aborigines.

Revising the Rendition

Re-appraising colonial artworks is also an issue for many artists who rework well-known images to open them to novel interpretations and new visual outcomes. This began in Australia in the 1980s as part of the broader postmodern ‘quotation’ trend (Kerr 1999, 232). Due to its renowned status as the first history painting in Australia and its contentious depiction of George Augustus Robinson conciliating Tasmanian Aborigines, *The Conciliation* has been quoted by artists Geoff Parr and Rew Hanks. Both Parr and Hanks maintain the original composition but subvert the

meaning of *The Conciliation* by changing the figures and transforming the formal qualities.

Like Hoorn and Broughton, Parr believes *The Conciliation* replicates “the deception” of Robinson’s mission (1985, 500). Parr argues that “it does not depict the reality, but illustrates a sophistry and one which enabled the colony of Van Diemen’s Land to officially condone and even materially assist an act of genocide” (1985, 500). Parr’s appropriation of *The Conciliation*, titled *The National Picture* (Fig. 41) reversed the skin colouring of black and white making the image no longer one of Robinson as the “principle figure” inducing “the wild natives” (*HTC*, 14 August 1835). Truggernana, instead of Robinson, is the central focus surrounded by white men and women. Representative of Tasmanian Aborigines, as she was for so long as ‘the last’, Truggernana is here conciliating with the white ‘invaders’. Shifting the focal attention from white to black, Parr arguably embraces Aboriginality, identifying with the “black subject rather than the white artist” (Kerr 1999, 236). This adheres to American activist bell hooks’ proposal that “loving blackness” can act as a tool of “political resistance [that] transforms our ways of looking ... [in order to] ... reclaim black life” (1992, 20). In changing the figures, Parr puts forth a new way to view the image.

Parr describes *The National Picture* as “a land rights piece” (Parr, G. 2009, pers. comm, 28-9 September). It marks the changes that came about with the Whitlam government that finally acknowledged Aboriginal land rights nationally. Hence, it is a reverse of the original painting which signalled the Aborigines’ agreement to leave their homelands. As Roslynn Haynes proposes (2006, 211), it is “a National Picture for our times, expressing a new agreement about the return of the land to the Indigenous people”. The radio signals mass communication, while

other devices such as the surveying equipment, wallaby fur skin, versions of the Aboriginal flag, and the digital nature of the image, lock the image into the present. In its initial display in the 1985 Sydney Perspecta, Parr's *The National Picture* had to be accompanied by a reproduction of *The Conciliation* because Duterrau's image was so little known and the contrast between the two images was vital to its interpretation. Hence, in reworking *The Conciliation*, Parr drew attention to *The Conciliation* and colonial artworks in general. In 2009 both images are widely known, especially in the context of considering colonial art. Juxtaposed with *The Conciliation*, the staged and parodic nature of Parr's image successfully provokes thought about Australia's past relations with Aborigines and how this has changed over time.



Figure 41: Geoff Parr, *The National Picture*, 1985

In 1999, Hanks also used *The Conciliation* to engage in contemporary views of colonial artworks. Hanks created several variations of the theme of *The Conciliation* in a large body of collages using different interpretations. This is noticeably evident in the titles of his images. *Philanthropist's Post of Folly* (Fig. 42), for example, conjures a view of Robinson as a seemingly well-meaning man who brashly intervened in something way beyond his understanding and control. The wall of colonial stamps layered behind *The Conciliation* in this image evokes the imperial drive behind Robinson's mission. Hanks asserts that the stamps also "make a poignant reference to the smuggling and mailing of stolen skeletal remains of the Aborigines to museums in England and Europe during 1850-1870" (1999, 36). It is an image tied to European endeavours.



Figure 42: Rew Hanks, *Philanthropist's Post of Folly*, 1999

In *The Machiavellian Minstrel* (Fig. 43) the Aboriginal figures are camouflaged by "a wrinkled maze of roads and rivers" (Hanks 1999, 39)

highlighting their connection to the land. Robinson is conveyed as deceitful. He is depicted as 'Black Robinson' as he was sometimes known, his face darkened with a charred bank note. This implies mercenary motivation. However, the true cost of his mission is inescapably written all over his jacket which bears the map he made of Aboriginal graves at Wybalenna.



Figure 43: Rew Hanks, *The Machiavellian Minstrel*, 1999

Another image in this series, *So Many of Them Always Coming in Big Boats* (Fig. 44), breaks *The Conciliation* down into a fractured silhouette. The figures become empty cavities, their presence no longer tied to the moment depicted. The Aboriginal figures dissolve almost entirely into the background while the shape of Robinson remains. Lines of an old map of Van Diemen's Land pierce through parts of the image like roots rupturing soil. It is a chaotic picture that refuses to let the

viewer's eye settle. Exploration vessels are repetitiously pasted in the space that was landscape in *The Conciliation*, potently conveying discovery and infiltration.



Figure 44: Rew Hanks, *So Many of Them Always Coming in Big Boats*, 1999

Hanks argues that representing *The Conciliation* in several different ways according to how it has been interpreted “helped clarify historical issues which had been repeatedly misconstrued throughout Tasmanian history and seriously influenced contemporary interpretations of the past” (1999, abstract). The exhibition title (Legge Gallery, 1999), *Robinson’s Reflective Reticence* provokes thought over the reticent nature of Tasmania’s colonial past, of how seldom it is publicly addressed. Since this collection of work, Hanks has continued to produce work dealing with Australia’s colonial past, creating images which seek to incite opinions and raise awareness about Australia’s history.

In *It’s Not Only Black and White* (Fig. 45), Hanks portrays Truggernana as a “Black Militaristic Mannequin” (Hanks 2008) with a rifle in one hand and dead

birds in the other. The white woman depicted is Germaine Greer. Together they represent “two iconic Australian feminists” (Hanks 2008). Hanks theatrically applauds Greer’s suggestion that embracing Aboriginality may help ease national guilt and shame over our treatment of Aborigines, yet questions Truggernana’s motivation. Truggernana is depicted wearing a large crucifix. In an accompanying description of the image, Hanks openly asks the viewer “Does this symbolise her role in enticing the remnants of her race to join the crusade led by a Christian zealot who herded his 'black sheep' onto Flinders Island?” (Hanks 2008). In emphasising the convoluted nature of judging past actions, Hanks repeatedly raises possibilities rather than asserting a particular view. Both Hanks and Parr launch images from Australia’s colonial past back into the spotlight giving them contemporary relevance and using them as a catalyst for reconsiderations of the past.

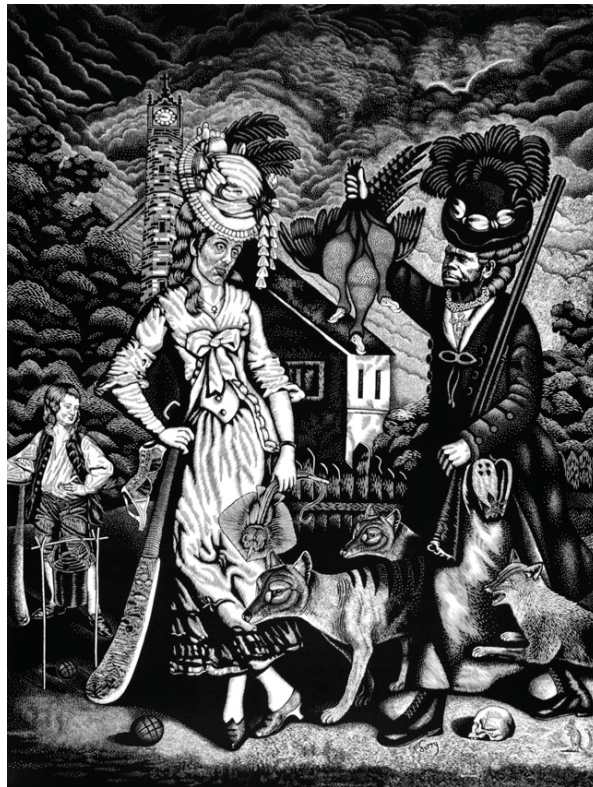


Figure 45: Rew Hanks, *It's Not Only Black and White*, 2008

Displayed Today

Today in 2009, Duterrau's portraits are exhibited in the TMAG's colonial gallery, *Encounters*. They were initially positioned in TMAG as items of ethnography, but are now positioned as art representing a colonial point of view.²² The *Encounters* gallery is balanced by a new permanent exhibition space in TMAG, *Ninngenneh Tunapry* which translates as 'to give knowledge and understanding'. While *Encounters* houses colonial portraits of Aborigines, mainly Duterrau's, which may be seen to perpetuate the myth of racial extinction, *Ninngenneh Tunapry* is dedicated to celebrating and sharing the ongoing practices of Tasmanian Aboriginal culture. *Ninngenneh Tunapry* is given prominence in the museum being the first exhibition space visitors pass through, promoting the continual practice of Tasmanian Aboriginal culture before the *Encounters* gallery is viewed.

There is no static way to value Duterrau's work as "everything that is known or surmised about the past gets reinterpreted through each new generation's updated lenses" (Lowenthal 1998, 112). Nonetheless, public memorials such as Duterrau's portraits are "exemplary of an artwork's social life, its life in society's mind" (Young 2003, 246). They reveal the importance of art in colonial Tasmanian society as well as art's ongoing relevance to historical research and societal interest in the past. Colonial artworks and the circumstances that led to their creation are an

²²A photograph from 1902 by J. W. Beattie shows Duterrau's portraits in the TMAG's 'The New Tasmanian Room' in the background of a collection of Aboriginal ethnographic artefacts. From 1976 onwards the portraits were put on permanent display as art after being restored for the exhibition 'The Tasmanian Aborigine in Art' (Bonyhady 2000a, 25).

important channel into the past. As James Young posits, “the life of memory exists primarily in historical time: in the activity that brings monuments into being, in the ongoing exchange between people and their historical makers” (2003, 246). The petition to acquire Duterrau’s portraits sits within a field of views that, for varying motivations, represents a consensus to remember the culture of Tasmanian Aborigines. The controversy surrounding the proposed National Picture stirred by Gilbert Robertson reveals that Robinson’s mission was as contentious then as it is now. I feel the opportunity to read historical artworks should be available to all, as the museum is not only a “burial chamber of the past”, but also a “site of possible resurrections –however mediated and contaminated in the eye of the beholder” (Huyssen 1995, 15). As pointed out by Bonyhady, Hoorn, Parr and Hanks, Duterrau’s work elicits many different reactions and, in doing so, drives people to reconsider their understanding of Tasmania’s past.

Conclusion

Duterrau's portrayals of Aboriginal people have been seen as insignificant in the scheme of colonial artworks, overshadowed by the more artistically competent Thomas Bock and John Glover. Yet Duterrau gave his Aboriginal subjects great presence, corporeally and in an immediate sense of time. They are not decontextualised as an organic specimen like Bock's, Africanised and broadly rendered Other like Petit's, Simpkinson's and Prout's may be, nor are they insignificantly placed within a gaping landscape like Glover's images. Despite the aesthetic shortcomings, this thesis has shown that the scale and medium elevate Duterrau's oil portraits to an engagingly distinct status. His portraits reflect an interest in Tasmanian Aboriginal culture and are symptomatic of varying responses towards the fate of the Aborigines.

As discussed throughout this thesis, Duterrau carved many milestones into Australian art history. His four portraits of Aborigines represent the first public purchase of art in Australia and he may have been the first to lecture on art in Australia. Duterrau also produced what is widely accepted as the first history painting in Australia. In a present day view, Duterrau's work has immense historical significance, especially in connection to the controversies surrounding Robinson, Truggernana and the other 'domesticated' Aborigines depicted. As was emphasised throughout this thesis, viewing colonial European artwork that represents Aborigines is complex and variable especially when emotionally charged. Nonetheless, a wealth of information can be found in examining these portrayals.

Duterrau's depictions of Aborigines may be read alongside written accounts of their creation, such as the newspaper reports I have referred to; independently, as with the formal analysis of the etchings in Chapter Two; or they may be used to support a particular reading of an historical figure or moment, as shown with *The Conciliation* in Chapter Three. Historian William D. Wright (2002, 147) cautioned: "Art is more problematic for historians [than written accounts], because it knows no restraints and can override or abuse evidence". Here, Wright appears to be missing the fundamental point that art is evidence in itself. History always involves an interplay of "the 'discourse of the real' as against the 'discourse of the imaginary' or the 'discourse of desire'" (White 1990, 20). Artworks are no less credible than written accounts, both of which are indicative of this interplay and a particular point of view.

This thesis has firmly etched Duterrau's place in Tasmanian colonial art history, yet situating Duterrau's place within a broader colonial context still needs to be addressed. There is room to thoroughly consider Duterrau in relation to other colonial artists depicting Aborigines across Australia; in a global context amongst artists depicting native inhabitants from the Orient, the Pacific and the Americas, and in contrast to nineteenth-century Aboriginal artists such as Tommy McRae who depicted Europeans, Chinese settlers and Aborigines, and William Barak who depicted Aborigines.

The Conciliation and Duterrau's portraits were as equivocally valued at the time of their creation as they are now. Meanings may be subverted as modern-day artists, such as Geoff Parr and Rew Hanks, rework the images to endorse new readings. Duterrau's work will no doubt always be used to substantiate different versions of historical happenings as his work is a colonial palimpsest, open to new

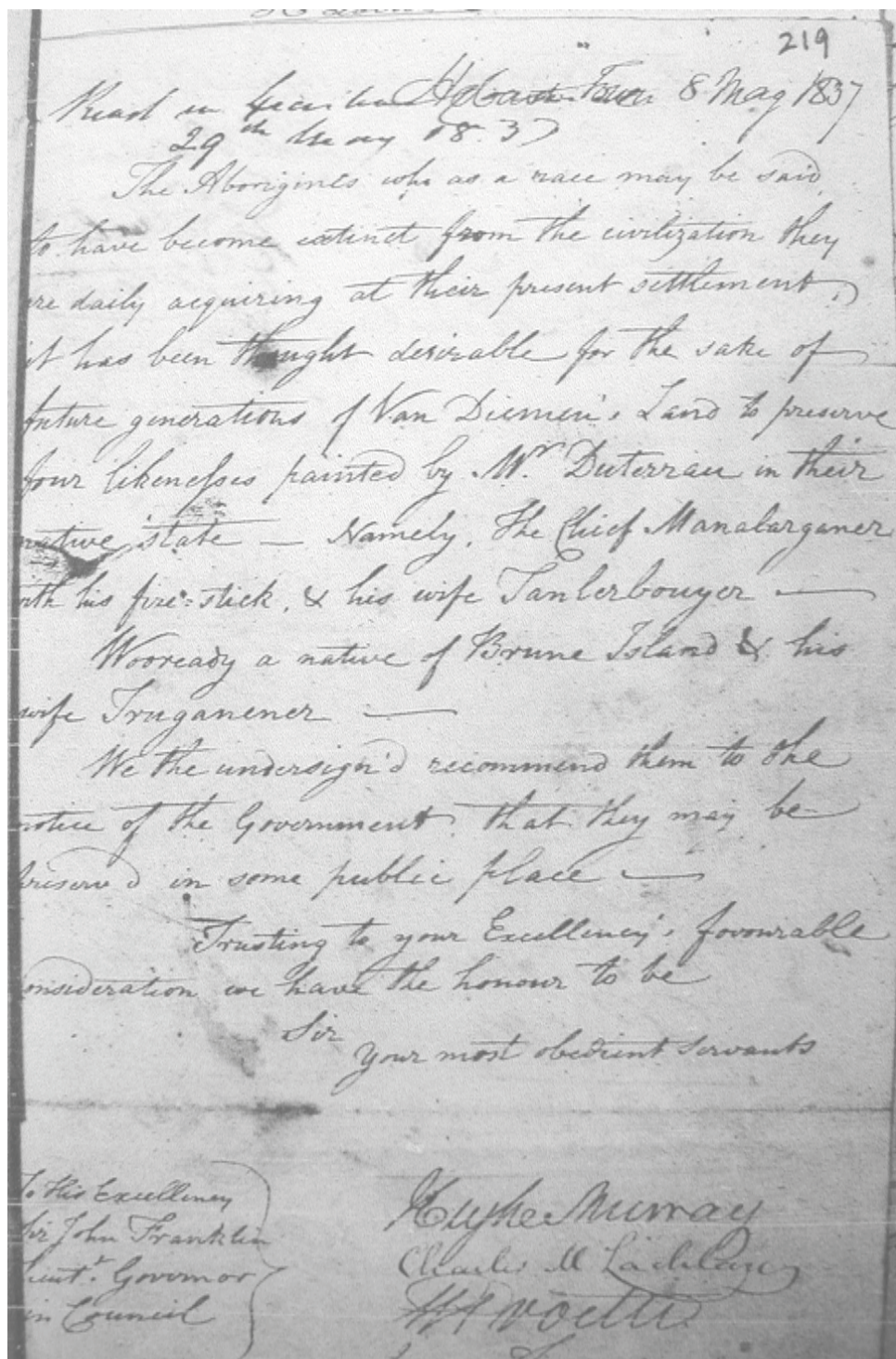
layers of meaning which will be inscribed culturally, individually and generationally.

Appendix A:

THE PETITION TO ACQUIRE DUTERRAU'S PORTRAITS

I have included images of the documents as they were scanned from microfilm at the Archives Office of Tasmania. A typed transcription follows.

Index to Colonial Secretary in Correspondence, Archives Office of Tasmania, 29 May 1837a, CS05 896/1, p.219-222



29 May 1837

The Aborigines who as a race may be said to have become extinct from the civilisation they are daily acquiring at their present settlement it has been thought desirable for the sake of the future generations of Van Diemen's Land to preserve four likenesses painted by Mr Duterrau in their native state –Namely, the Chief Manalargenna with his fire stick & his wife Tanleboueyer

Woureddy a native of Brune Island & his wife Trugananer

We the undersign'd recommend them to the notice of the Government that they may be preserv'd in some public place

Trusting to your Excellency's favourable consideration we have the honour to be

Sir

Your most obedient servants

To His Excellency

Sir John Franklin

Lieut. Governor

In Council

Some Legible Names: Who they were:

David Lord In April 1827 the land commissioners recorded that David Lord was the richest man in Van Diemen's Land. Lord was one of the foundation subscribers to the Van Diemen's Land Bank in 1823 and a director until his death.

Allen, S. 1967, *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, Volume 2, Melbourne University Press, pp. 126-127.

*John
Wilkinson*

Established the first Pharmacy in Hobart Town in 1832.

School of Pharmacy History, University of Tasmania, accessed 8 September 2009,
<<http://www.pharmacy.utas.edu.au/history/taspharmhistory.html>>

- James Wood* Secretary of the Hobart Mechanics Institute.²³
- John Bogle* Would marry Duterrau's daughter in 1838.
- John Thomson* Member of the Hobart Mechanics Institute.
- James Ross* Editor of the *Hobart Town Courier*. Member of the Hobart Mechanics Institute.
- John Pedder* Was a member of both the Executive and Legislative Councils in Van Diemen's Land.
- Howell, P.A. 1967, *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, Volume 2, Melbourne University Press, pp. 319-120.
- Henry Melville* Journalist, publisher and author. Bought the *Colonial Times* in 1830 and began the *Hobart Town Magazine* 1833. Published his views in *History of the Island of Van Diemen's Land from the Year 1824 to 1835*.
- Flinn, E. 1967, *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, Volume 2, Melbourne University Press, pp. 221-22.
- Mr Bedford* Member of the Hobart Mechanics Institute.
- A chaplain in Van Diemen's Land. Conducted services and prayers at St David's Cathedral, the gaol and the prisoners' barracks.
- Australian Dictionary of Biography*, 1966, Volume 1, Melbourne University Press, pp. 77-78.

²³ Members of the Hobart Mechanics Institute have been determined through a newspaper report of its establishment (*Hobart Town Gazette*, 23 June 1827).

*Gilbert
Robertson* Editor of the *True Colonist*.

*William Gore
Elliston* Auctioneer and editor. Bought the *Hobart Town Courier* from James Ross in 1836.

*William
Crowther* Surgeon, naturalist and parliamentarian.
Australian Dictionary of Biography, 1969, Volume 3,
Melbourne University Press, pp. 501-503.

This appears on the back of the petition document. A translation follows on the next page:

Recd. in 4. (signed) ²¹⁸ Campbell St
29th May 1837
I am directed to inform your
Excellency that the four portraits
of the Aborigines were painted three
years ago, when living with Mr.
Robinson — The 4 according to my
list of sizes & prices make eighty
Guineas
I am
Your Excellency's
Obedient true Servant
Benj. Duterrau
To this Excellency
Mr John Franklin
Lord Governor
218

29th May 1837

I am hitherto to inform your Excellency that the four portraits of the Aborigines were painted three years ago, when they were living with Mr Robinson — The 4 according to my list of sizes & prices make eighty guineas

I am

Your Excellency's

Obedient true Servant

Benj. Duterrau

To this Excellency

Mr John Franklin

Lord Governor

Appendix B:

RECORDS OF DUTERRAU'S LECTURES FROM CONTEMPORARY LOCAL NEWSPAPERS

Hobart Town Courier, 12 July
1833, accessed 5 March 2009,
<[http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-
page644141](http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-page644141)>

“On Tuesday next we have much pleasure in announcing that Mr. Duterrau, the eminent artist recently arrived from London, has kindly undertaken to deliver his first lecture of a course on the fine arts, comprising especially the departments of sculpture, painting, and engraving.”

Hobart Town Courier, 19 July
1833, accessed 5 March 2009,
<[http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-
page644149](http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-page644149)>

“On Tuesday evening Mr. Duterrau the eminent portrait and landscape painter, who has lately arrived in this colony, delivered his lecture on painting, sculpture, and engraving, to a very full meeting of the members of the Mechanics' Institution. It was heard with mingled profit and delight by a most attentive audience ... ‘It has been remarked, said Mr. Duterrau that art and science have but little chance of being promoted in Van Diemen's Land, owing to the infancy of the colony--an infancy that some may wish would last forever, rather than have the trouble of any higher degree of thinking than that which is necessary ... Those who countenance art and science are setting an example to the rising generation, who no doubt, will be grateful for putting in their way as they arrive at maturity, the means to become a truly civilized people.’”

Hobart Town Courier, 29 May
1835, accessed 5 March 2009,
<[http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-
page644743](http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-page644743)>

“Next Tuesday, Mr. Duterrau will deliver his first lecture on painting, in which, he will take the opportunity to shew the great advantages that this Colony would derive if the arts were duly, cultivated in it, and some attempts made to lift the standard of good taste generally amongst us.”

Hobart Town Courier, 2
October 1835, accessed 5
March 2009,
<[http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-
page644816](http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-page644816)>

“On Tuesday next Mr. Duterrau has kindly undertaken to proceed with his interesting course on painting. This gentleman has presented the Institution with an admirably executed alto-relievo head of the young native chief Timmy which serves with the splendid portrait of Dr Priestley to ornament the lecture room.”

Hobart Town Courier, 5 June
1835, accessed 12 April 2009,
<[http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-
article4180601](http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article4180601)>

Duterrau lectured on painting and “He enlarged with much effect on the advantages we might derive in this remote corner of the world from cultivating good taste, more especially the great ground works of it the principle of honour and the beauty of truth. As a powerful and instructive example he analysed that splendid picture of Raphael, ‘The School of Athens’. While he pointed out the characters of the different schools of Pythagoras, Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle, portrayed in it, the attentive audience could not help drawing a comparison far from favourable to the present age between the principles that guided ancient and modern education ... Mr. Duterrau in a most interesting and agreeable manner, in chaste and persuasive language, pointed out the characteristics of a good picture he showed the necessity of attending to graceful attitudes in the figures to grouping and propriety of arrangement or composition as it called and harmony of colours, and numerous other points which this brief notice obliges us to pass by.”

Colonial Times, 29 August
1837, accessed 5 March 2009,
<<http://nla.gov.au/nla.news->

“MR. DUTERRAU will deliver his second lecture on Painting and Sculpture at the Court of Requests Room tomorrow evening, the

Colonial Times, 29 August 1837, accessed 5 March 2009, <<http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article8650256>>

“MR. DUTERRAU will deliver his second lecture on Painting and Sculpture at the Court of Requests Room tomorrow evening, the 30th instant, at seven o'clock precisely.

Collins street, August 29, 1837.”

Hobart Town Courier, 1 September 1837, accessed 5 March 2009, <<http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article4170044>>

“MR. DUTERRAU will deliver his second lecture on Painting and Sculpture, on Wednesday evening next, the 6th inst. at 7 o'clock, in the Court of Requests room.”

Hobart Town Courier, 27 April 1838, accessed 2 June 2009, <<http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-page645386>>

“Tuesday evening next, Mr. Duterrau will deliver a Lecture on Painting.”

Colonial Times and Tasmanian, 17 July 1849, accessed 1 September 2009,

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